

DOCTORAL THESIS

Professional Role Identities of Translation and Interpreting Teachers in China: A Multiple Case Narrative Study

CHEN, Bacui

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ABSTRACT

Developing a translation and interpreting (T&I hereafter) teacher identity in the context of Chinese universities is challenging as T&I teachers combine the sub-roles of trainers/educators, researchers, and practitioners, and the context is generally more supportive of constructing a researcher role than trainer/educator and practitioner roles. A strong teacher identity is vital as it enhances teachers' willingness to engage in professional development. The purpose of this study was to explore the professional role identities of T&I teachers in China and the implications for their professional development. The focus was on describing the main role and sub-role identity development that T&I teachers undergo and the role identity interaction they engage in. More precisely, by adopting a multiple case narrative approach, the present study has drawn upon a dynamic systems model of role identity (DSMRI; Garner & Kaplan, 2019; Kaplan & Garner, 2017, 2018), to conceptualise T&I teachers' beliefs, self-perceptions, goals, and actions within a set of control parameters consisting of socio-cultural context, subject domain, and dispositions.

The findings indicated that T&I teachers generally displayed great job satisfaction toward the main role of a teacher, with an array of emotions such as delight and defeat, fulfilment, and loss attached to the sub-roles. The higher education context has both empowered and entrapped the T&I teachers through institutional requirements while the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed them to adjust to the new normal. It was also found that T&I teacher participants develop a three-stage role identity (TITRI) trajectory starting from practitioner to three roles into one.

Furthermore, three kinds of interactions between the roles—overlapping, overshadowing, both overlapping, and overshadowing were illustrated by a TITRI framework. The integration of the three roles contributed to the flexibility needed to prosper in T&I teacher development, allowing for dynamic interaction across roles. In contrast, T&I teachers were inclined to participate in professional development if they were not identified as T&I teachers or did not feel acknowledged as trainers/educators, researchers, or practitioners.

This study contributes to the scant literature on T&I teacher identity research by articulating and visualising how different role identities develop and interact throughout the professional careers of a teacher. Additionally, the models and frameworks may also serve as a framework for conceptualising role identity and the dynamic interplay across roles, providing grounds to offer suggestions for universities in China to encourage T&I teacher professional development. Though the geographical and socio-cultural context of this study is the Chinese mainland, insights generated may be of interest to the whole T&I community internationally, as it will shed empirical light on a better understanding into T&I teachers and will have implications for T&I teacher education worldwide.