

DOI: 10.31548/hspedagog13(1).2022.89-95  
УДК 378.147

## PROFESSIONALISATION OF TRANSLATOR TRAINING IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

L. SHEN, PhD student

*National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine*

ORCID: 0000-0001-7421-2899

E-mail: shen923801@gmail.com

**Abstract.** *This paper deals with the problem of professionalisation of translators. It looks at the system of professionalisation that has developed in Chinese universities that train translators. The essence of the concept of 'professionalisation' is specified in the context of this study. The trend of recent years towards an increasing number of higher education institutions authorised to offer the Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) programme has been noted. The focus is on marketisation is an important factor in MTI training. The most important teaching methods for effective professionalisation are presented: specialisation in a particular field, case-study, the comparative analysis method, method of combining theory and practice, process-oriented approach, the product-oriented approach, the computer assisted translation method, the translation workshop method, the translation corpus method, the consciously practical method. The main advantages of the translator training system are identified: the continuity of the professionalisation process – from the beginning of university studies to further training during the career, the practical orientation of the majority of the courses, the wide range of practical training opportunities in different organisations and institutions, the specialisation in specific fields (technology, medicine, economics, etc.), the use of effective teaching methods to develop practical skills in interpretation and translation. The important role of on-campus learning centres and off-campus internship bases set up by colleges and universities to facilitate internships for students is noted.*

**Key words:** *professionalisation, educational process, interpretation and translation, translator.*

**Introduction.** The focus of translator training in higher education institutions is driven by the needs of the translation market and employment opportunities. Considering that an important factor in organising translator training and determining the content of the respective educational programmes is the specialisation of their prospective activities, universities in the People's Republic of China have recently developed a system of translator training that is based on professionalisation. A synthesis of the experiences of Chinese universities in training translators on the basis of professionalisation may be useful to incorporate this aspect into the educational process of universities in other countries.

The relevance of the issue is related to the interaction of opposing tendencies in translation education – towards universalisation and towards specialisation. On the one hand, the professional activity of a translator in today's world is becoming more versatile than before. In addition, the translator's deeper involvement in the performance of translation in a particular field or domain requires background knowledge in that field and hence specialisation.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** An analysis of the works of Chinese academics, education policy makers and primary materials relating to translator training programmes and the educational process itself has revealed that the issue of professionalisation of translator training is one of the most

pressing issues in today's translation education. This is underscored by Deputy Education Minister Wu Qidi, who called the translation situation an "emergency" because of China's "acute shortage of qualified foreign language professionals in translation and interpretation" [3].

Scholars understand the concept of professionalisation in different ways. There is a broader definition, for example: «Professionalization is a social process by which any trade or occupation transforms itself into a true profession of the highest integrity and competence» [2]. The academic literature also presents a narrower and more specific definition with a focus on a particular aspect, where professionalisation is seen, for example, as education, training and coaching that transforms a worker into a professional [5].

Even considering some discrepancies in the understanding of professionalisation, it can be seen that this process includes training at an educational institution (particularly a university), internships, apprenticeships, improvement in profession, further training, and participation in professional associations.

Let us consider what professionalisation means for translators and how it is carried out during university studies. Undoubtedly, it is very important to learn two languages – the source language and the target language. However, as J. Czopik, it is clear that language skills alone are not enough to translate texts. Without knowledge of the subject matter described in the text, the text cannot be understood, let alone translated into another language. It is therefore also necessary to ensure that the text, especially the technical vocabulary in the source language, is not an incoherent set of technical words in the target language. The combination of language knowledge with technical knowledge and the ability to express it correctly in the target language is very important [1]. The acquisition of linguistic and specialist knowledge, the formation and development of translation skills and

specialisation in a particular field or type of translation can contribute to the professionalisation of translators.

**The purpose** of this paper is to identify the main features of the professionalisation of translator training in the People's Republic of China.

**Methods.** Several research methods were used to achieve this purpose, namely: theoretical analysis – to study the research workers' heritage on the problem under study, method of generalisation of teaching experience – to identify the features of professionalisation of translator training in the People's Republic of China, method of instantiation – to highlight the main advantages of translator training system in Chinese universities.

**Results and discussions.** The success of preparing translators for their future professional career depends on the orientation of the educational process, the content of the educational programme and the current needs of the translation market. The introduction at Fudan University Shanghai of a new educational programme for translators entitled "Translation English-Chinese", the content of which deserves special attention, is evidence of the flexible response to this set of conditions. The peculiarity of this and similar educational offerings has been pointed out by scholars at Chinese universities. In particular, He Gangqiang, Dean of the Translation Institute at Fudan University, called the widely held view that understanding a foreign language is inevitably linked to the ability to translate completely wrong. After all, only people who are not only fluent in a foreign language but also have professional experience as a translator are suitable for such work. This is why Professor Chai Mingjiong of Shanghai University of International Studies supports offering translation programmes only as part of postgraduate studies – for students who have already completed their foreign language studies, because translation is a "demanding job that requires foreign language skills" [3].

In general, educational programmes in translation are relatively new for China. In order to meet the increasing demand for professional translators from/into Chinese, only in 2007 did the Chinese Ministry of Education implement university programmes in translation and interpretation. However, the magnitude of the needs of the translation market, and consequently the programmes to deliver them, is evidenced by the fact that 206 higher education institutions have been authorised to offer the Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) programme [4].

Universities are specialising in translator training – e.g. technical translation, legal translation, economic translation. Higher education institutions are reforming the model of translator training, attaching great importance to practice in the educational process and improving curricula and syllabuses for MTI specialisations. Marketisation is an important factor in MTI training, and the training of professional translators is an inevitable market requirement. Most of the existing MTI training units provide some degree of market-oriented training for undergraduates, offer relevant courses and lectures and provide relevant practical opportunities.

The MTI Education Centre at Guangdong University of Foreign Languages and International Trade offers six majors for Master of Translation: International Conference Interpretation, Applied Translation, Business Translation, Legal Translation, Media Translation, Translation and Localization Management. Students can choose according to their aspirations, interests and abilities. Studies and internships are available in a variety of fields.

The MTI Education Centre of Peking University has established permanent translation practice bases at World Knowledge Press, China Foreign Languages Press, Xinhua News Agency, China Translation and Publishing Corporation and other institutions. As

required by the MTI program of Peking University, each base provides postgraduate students with timely opportunities for translation, compilation, editing, etc.

Shanghai University of Foreign Languages maintains a "comprehensive strategic partnership" with the United Nations and the European Union at the same time. MTI postgraduate students specialising in simultaneous interpretation at conferences from the university's Graduate School of Translation can apply to the United Nations office in Geneva and other units for internships.

All colleges and universities do their best to provide students with quality internship opportunities, especially to instil market concepts and employment awareness to realise the specialisation of translators. This introduction runs through the entire MTI training process.

The work of the translation market also has a strong influence on the special development of translators. First and foremost, translators need to be 'professional', improve professional ethics and industry standards for translators. Secondly, in order to increase the specialisation of translators, a system of access to the translation market must be established and certification of translators must be implemented in order to improve the overall quality of the translation industry.

For students specialising in translation, translation practice runs through the whole study process. Professional translation practice for MTIs usually takes place in the third semester after enrolment, and this time is usually at least one semester. Students may self-refer to an internship site or universities may recommend students to intern at government agencies or companies that meet the qualifications for internships to ensure that students receive standardised and effective training and practice, and improve their translation skills and professional ethics. The content of translation practice may include activities

such as translation practice (extracurricular homework) in practical classes, part-time translation and translation practice in professional internships.

Masters in Interpretation have a minimum of 400 hours of interpreting practice (calculated on the basis of recording time) and at least 25 working days of interpreting practice during university studies. The practice content may include interpreting at an exhibition, interpreting for a front desk escort, consecutive interpretation at meetings or simultaneous interpreting, etc. Masters in Translation must have at least 100,000 Chinese characters or foreign words to practice translation, in the content of literary translation, translation of letters, translation of official documents, translation of commercial advertising materials, translation of academic writing, etc.

To facilitate internships for students, colleges and universities have set up their own on-campus training centres and off-campus internship bases.

For example, the study centre of the Shanghai University of Foreign Languages can provide short-term and long-term internships for translation students. Short-term projects are organised during the winter and summer holidays and last from 6 to 8 weeks. The Training Centre takes all translation students as short-term trainees and carries out non-urgent translation tasks under the guidance of internal translators in the Training Centre. Long-term projects cover the entire period of students' studies at the university. Under the responsive guidance of experienced translators in the training centre, trainees can carry out more complex translation tasks. Organisations that have signed cooperation agreements with the university in the field of professional practice for students include the UN, EU, Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office, Shanghai Pudong New District Foreign Affairs Office, Kunshan Jiangsu Province Foreign

Affairs Office, Shanghai Culture and Trade Language Service Base, Shanghai Daily Editorial Office, Huawei Company, Johnson Medical Instrument Company of America, etc.

The internship bases of MTI Education Center of Peking University include: foreign language teaching and research publisher, Chinese language translation publisher, intellectual property publisher, Xinhua News Agency Reference News Editorial Office, China Daily and Beijing Weekly Editorial Office, Huawei Company, Boya Language Service Company, etc.

The Translation and Interpretation School of Beijing Language and Culture University has established good and stable cooperation relations with foreign language bureaus, China Educational Television, China Central Television (foreign languages), China Translation and Publishing Corporation, foreign language teaching and learning publishing house, Tongwen Translation Bureau, Oriental Culture Development Corporation and many other translation companies, which provide many internship and practical opportunities for students

Teaching methods are also important for effective professionalisation. Teachers usually use the following methods when teaching translation:

- 1) The first way, the most popular, is to teach translation in a specific field (e.g. technical translation, legal translation, etc.). Teaching starts with learning the vocabulary in that field and finding equivalents in the target language. Based on this, students work with the complex grammatical structures of specialised written texts. This method concentrates mainly on the acquisition of skills and specialised vocabulary in the chosen field. The trainees will master and learn: the theory of technical translation; the terminology of scientific and technical literature and documentation; the practice of translating special materials/texts; the subject area (a specific domain), which

fundamentally constitutes the content of technical translation training for students.

2) A method of combining theory and practice. This methodology can manifest itself in two ways. First, translation theory can be used to analyse existing examples of translation, and it is best to use multiple translations of the same source text. By analysing the different methods used by predecessors to solve the same problem, the pros and cons of the different translation methods can be compared. Secondly, according to the principles and skills learned, with appropriate exercises. Exercises can be of two kinds: firstly, the students analyse an existing translation on their own; secondly, the students translate it themselves. It is better to choose a few typical examples of translation and do a comparative analysis in class. Comparative analysis should be the most important method of teaching translation.

3) The comparative analysis method. The action of the comparative translation method in a translation class is as follows: the teacher divides the whole class into several groups of five to six students each. Before each class, organize a corpus of translations for the students and then report their translation results to the class in class and take questions and comments from the other groups of students. The teacher then shows the class 3-5 translated versions of the corpus and helps the students compare and analyse different translations of the same work from different perspectives of language and culture.

4) Case study method. The use of the case method in translation classes gives students the opportunity to acquire theoretical knowledge on the theory of translation, to broaden their practical experience, to develop their ability to express their thoughts, proposals, ideas, as well as the ability to listen to an alternative point of view and express their opinion in a well-reasoned way. This method also improves students' analytical and evaluation skills, teamwork skills and

the application of theoretical material in practice.

Other methods such as the process-oriented approach, the product-oriented approach, the computer assisted translation method, the translation workshop method, the translation corpus method, the consciously practical method, etc. are also widely used.

The professionalisation of translators in China is an ongoing process and also continues in their professional activities. There are a large number of organisations for translator training and professional development courses in China. They function both offline and online. They mainly offer the following specialisation: consecutive interpretation course, simultaneous interpretation course, translation course.

Some universities have higher schools of translation and interpretation that specialise in the further education of translators. These include the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at Beijing Foreign Studies University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and International Trade, for example.

Peking University of Foreign Studies has an Asia-Pacific Translation Training Centre, established on 11 August 2008. It was established when the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation of Beijing Foreign Studies University became a member of the Permanent International Conference of University Institutes of Translation and Interpretation (CIUTI). The centre is designed to train translators from professional translation organisations in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Conclusion.** The professionalisation of translators is one of the principal means of ensuring the quality of translations. Recently, universities in the People's Republic of China have developed a system for training translators that is based on professionalisation and whose study may be useful for consideration in training these professionals in other

countries. The main advantages of the translator training system are the continuity of the professionalisation process – from the beginning of university studies to further training during the career, the practical orientation of the majority of the courses, the wide range of practical training opportunities in different organisations and institutions, the specialisation in specific fields (technology, medicine, economics, etc.), the use of effective teaching methods to develop practical skills in interpretation and translation.

### References

1. Czopik J. (2014). Quo Vadis, Übersetzer A. D. 2014? Professionalisierung als Dolmetscher und Übersetzer. Mitteilungen des BDÜ Landesverbandes Nordrhein-Westfalen e.V. 1. Ausgabe 2014. Nr. 43. Februar 2014
2. Nilsson H. (2021). "Professionalism, Lecture 5, What is a Profession?" URL: <http://www.cs.nott.ac.uk/~psznhn/G52GRP/LectureNotes/lecture05-4up.pdf>
3. Schneider R. (2004). China professionalisiert Übersetzer Ausbildung. Shanghai Daily, 2006-04-03. URL: <https://uepo.de/2006/04/07/china-professionalisiert-uebersetzer-ausbildung-neue-seminare-an-fudan-universitaet-shanghai/>
4. Wang Han. (2016). Found in Translation: How China's most elite interpreters and translators are cultivated. URL: <http://en.shisu.edu.cn/resources/features/found-in-translation>
5. What is Professionalization, and why is it important? (2021) URL: <https://www.ecoleglobale.com/blog/professionalization-and-its-importance/>
6. Wright D. Yan Fu and the Tasks of the Translator. New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China. Ed. by Michael Lackner, Iwo Amelung and Joachim Kurtz. Leiden: Brill, 2001. P. 235-256.

## ПРОФЕСІОНАЛІЗАЦІЯ ПІДГОТОВКИ ПЕРЕКЛАДАЧІВ У КНР Л. Шен

**Анотація.** Статтю присвячено проблемі професіоналізації перекладачів. Розглянуто систему професіоналізації, яка склалась у китайських університетах, що здійснюють навчання перекладачів. Конкретизовано сутність поняття «професіоналізація» у контексті проведеного дослідження. Констатовано тенденцію останніх років до зростання кількості закладів вищої освіти, авторизованих для підготовки перекладачів за програмою the Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI). Акцентовано на маркетингу як важливому фактору у навчанні за програмою MTI. Представлено деякі методи навчання для ефективної професіоналізації майбутніх перекладачів: спеціалізація в певній галузі, тематичні дослідження, метод поєднання теорії та практики, процесно-орієнтований підхід, продукт-орієнтований підхід, метод перекладу з комп'ютерною підтримкою, метод перекладацьких семінарів, метод перекладацького корпусу, свідомо-практичний метод. Визначені основні переваги системи підготовки перекладачів – безперервність процесу професіоналізації – від початку навчання в університеті до подальшого навчання протягом кар'єри, практична спрямованість більшості курсів, широкий спектр можливостей практичного навчання в різних організаціях та інституціях, спеціалізація в окремих галузях (техніка, медицина, економіка тощо), використання ефективних методів навчання для розвитку практичних навичок усного та письмового перекладу. Відзначена важлива роль навчальних центрів на

*території кампусу та позауніверситетських баз стажування, створених коледжами й університетами для сприяння практичному навчанню студентів.*

**Ключові слова:** професіоналізація, освітній процес, усний і письмовий переклад, перекладач.