

Towards Professionalizing Public Service Translators in China: Education and certification

Zhiwei Wu

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, CHINA

ABSTRACT

Informed by the traits approach to a profession in sociology, I discuss how public service translators (PSTs) could be professionalized in China. I first contend that Chinese PSTs seem to be at the lower end of a professionalization continuum, when judged from four essential traits of a profession: abstract knowledge, autonomy, authority and altruism. Instead of fighting on all fronts, I propose how education and certification need to be prioritized to help professionalize PSTs. I suggest incorporating a stand-alone PST pathway into the Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) programme, whereby course offerings are specifically designed to train PSTs. In addition, I propose to revamp the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI), by offering add-on testing components to address PST domain speciality. The PST course offerings and add-on test design are explained in detail, with a view to professionalizing PSTs in China, and possibly in other countries and regions which favour a “top down” approach to professionalization.

KEYWORDS: certification, education, professionalization, public service translators