



Book Review

Mikkelson, H. & Jourdenais, R. (Eds). (2015). *The Routledge handbook of interpreting*. London/New York: Routledge.

Reviewed by Yanqiang Wang
Fudan University, China
yanqiangw@fudan.edu.cn

DOI: 10.12807/ti.108202.2016.r01

The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting is one of the *Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics* series, which provides comprehensive overviews of the key topics in applied linguistics. This latest handbook, co-edited by Holly Mikkelson and Renée Jourdenais, focuses on the multifaceted fields of interpreting through twenty-seven contributions which address almost all the segments and subjects of interpreting practices and studies. It serves as a valuable resource both for practising professionals who would like to follow the development of interpreting, and for scholars who are interested in exploring the wide variety of issues in interpreting studies. All the contributors provide a brief historical review, current development and future trends of the area of focus, with clearly defined terms and concepts to cater to the needs of various readerships.

The volume is organized into four parts: I – Historical Perspectives, II – Modes of Interpreting, III – Interpreting Settings, and IV – Issues and Debates. The first part begins with Jesús Baigorri-Jalón's historical overview of interpreting from early practice in ancient Egypt up to the Nuremberg Trials, when simultaneous interpreting was first adopted. The author not only describes the contribution of interpreters throughout this history, but also identifies some patterns of the development of this field. Chapter two is Julie Boéri's contribution, in which she reviews some key internal players within the interpreting field – specifically, professional organizations, training institutions and the academic community – and their roles in shaping the profession. To complement this, the external players such as government agencies and policy makers, who both positively and negatively influence the development of the profession, are touched upon by Sofia García-Beyaert in the third paper of the volume. The last chapter of Part I is Franz Pöchhacker's contribution on the evolution of interpreting research. After reviewing the paradigms and major topics of interpreting studies, he ends with the research topic of technology and warns against the technology-driven dehumanization of interpreting.

Part II concerns the modalities of interpreting, including almost all the active modes of interpreting in the field. The most widely used modes are simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting, reviewed by Kilian Seeber and Debra Russell in the former case, and Kayoto Takeda in the latter. The authors illustrate the development of each mode of interpreting and address some of the key skills needed in fulfilling the interpreting tasks.

Readers will gain an overall understanding of the working mechanism of these modes of interpreting and the basic skills that each respectively requires. The quality training of signed language interpreting is emphasized by Karen Bontempo and Jemina Napier. The final chapters of Part II are on the interaction between written translation and interpreting. Wallace Chen examines sight interpreting – the hybrid form that bridges written texts and oral translation. As a form of inter-semiotic translation, sight interpreting is widely used in conference, community and media interpreting settings. Chen focuses on the wider application of sight interpreting in interpreting training due to its similarities with simultaneous interpreting. The last chapter by Carmen Valero-Garcés addresses the opposite mode of sight interpreting: transcription and translation of spoken discourse. The topic is rarely discussed, though it is widely used in various settings.

Part III consists of nine chapters, covering almost all the settings of interpreting. Each author provides a brief historical introduction of the setting in discussion and explores the recurring issues such as quality, training, ethics, roles of interpreters and professionalization etc. Part III offers the reader a panoramic view of where interpreters could work as well as the features and challenges that arise in a particular setting. Ebru Diriker uses a great deal of facts and figures to show the professional development of conference interpreting, which has grown side by side with the expansion of international organizations and has so far been the most studied area. With more languages used in international conferences, the multiplicity of languages poses a challenge to those who organize interpreting in this setting. The second chapter is contributed by Jieun Lee, who analyses interpreting in the legal setting, particularly in court. The author emphasizes the importance of quality and ethics in court interpreting because of the high stakes involved in this field. The issue of ethics is further revisited by Sonja Pöllabauer, who explores the challenges of interpreting in asylum proceedings. Faced with a more complicated working environment, interpreters in this setting often have multiple roles to play as linguistic and cultural mediators, beyond the interpreting task per se.

Other settings discussed in this part are community interpreting by Marjory A. Bancroft, healthcare interpreting by Cynthia E. Roat and Ineke H. M. Crezee, interpreting in mental health care by Hanneke Bot, interpreting in education settings by Melissa B. Smith, interpreting for the mass media by Pedro Castillo, and interpreting in conflict zones by Barbara Moser-Mercer. Marjory A. Bancroft introduces community interpreting as a fast-emerging segment of interpreting in recent decades, driven by both demand and policy requirements for more language accessibility. The role of interpreter also evolves from the traditional conduit into a linguistic and cultural mediator. Furthermore the balance between the two roles raises the issue of ethics in interpreting, which is another recurring issue in interpreting in medical care settings. The following two chapters deal with professionalization in health interpreting. Both authors call for more training in this sector, not only for interpreters but also for the doctors who work with them. Similarly, Smith argues for more extensive training in her analysis of interpreting in educational settings. She also points out the impact of interpreting on the users of the services in particular in the school classroom.

The last two chapters touch upon interpreting in the mass media and in conflicts, which are relatively new fields of research in interpreting studies. Pedro Castillo gives a detailed description of this field, covering the recruitment and the diversified use of interpreters in mass media, from breaking news to entertainment. The specific profile of media interpreters as being at a crossroads between broadcaster, coordinator and fixer is analyzed.

In the last chapter of Part III, Moser-Mercer highlights the linkages between quality interpreting in conflict zones, protection and ethical decision-making. She also points out the importance of training to enable interpreters working in these settings to cope with the huge challenges – some of them life-threatening – that they entail.

Part IV of the volume explores the recurring issues and debates in interpreting. Uldis Ozolins begins the section with a survey of ethics standards in various settings. The author concludes that there is no single interpreter role and that codes of ethics help establish the interpreting habitus and promote the understanding of the interpreter role by other participants. Justine Ndong-Keller examines the impact of interpreting experience on the personal lives of interpreters in the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in their dealing with the vicarious trauma during and after the assignments. Sabine Braun addresses the emerging mode of remote interpreting facilitated by new technologies. Braun focuses on the implications of this new mode for the interpreters in terms of working conditions and job satisfaction, based on surveys in various interpreting settings.

Interpreting quality has been a key issue and debate in interpreting studies. Collados-Aís and Carica Becerra explore the definition of interpreting quality and ways of assessment. They point out that interpreting quality is often related to the perceptions of the communicative participants. Jean Turner in the following chapter examines the measurements used in interpreting testing and admission to academic programs. She identifies different types of assessment tools used in different stages of training and professional development. Next, Chuanyun Bao explores the issue of professional training, identifying which skills professional interpreters need to be trained in. He also looks at the multiple levels of training from traditional graduate-level training to short-term intensive courses, and from orientation workshops to refresher programs. Outside of the professional community, there are interpreters working in various modes and settings: those non-professional interpreters are recognized and highlighted by Aída Martínez-Gómez in her chapter. It is pointed out that non-professional or ad-hoc interpreting needs to be further defined and studied to make interpreting studies more inclusive. In the final chapter, Mette Rudvin addresses the issue of professional identity of interpreters. She shows the parameters affecting individual and collective self-perceptions as a profession, and the challenges in the interpreting community to establish a unified identity.

As its name suggests, the handbook is a resource-rich collection of topics in interpreting, offering a comprehensive overview of the past, present and future of the activity. It covers nearly all the fields of interpreting practice and studies – including some emerging segments such as media interpreting, transcription and remote interpreting – as well as new issues for research such as remote interpreting and the phenomenon of non-professional interpreting.

Each chapter can be likened to a broad picture and encyclopaedic illustration of one segment of interpreting, which more often than not includes a number of sub-topics; thus it is usually not feasible for the respective author to go deeper and explore everything in great detail. However, the broad-stroke outline invites future research and more discussion.

In an era of booming interpreting training, more trainers need to be trained as Bao argues in his contribution. The handbook is definitely a timely reader for ‘the training of the trainers’, to promote the healthy growth of interpreting education and the professionalization of the interpreting community at large.