

BOOK REVIEW: TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

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More than three years since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in early 2020, a semblance of normality has returned and there is the cautious hope that the worrying times of lockdowns, quarantines, and other restrictions have been consigned to history. Yet some adaptations appear to have become permanent fixtures, such as moves towards remote working from home, increased digitalisation, as well as changing employment patterns across many professional domains.

Translation and Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19 brings together contributions from twenty-five authors representing institutions in nine countries across three continents. As highlighted at the outset by co-editors Kanglong Liu and Andrew K.F. Cheung (both based at Hong Kong Polytechnic University), the fundamental importance of language and communication during the pandemic and the role of translation and interpreting therein makes this volume a key addition to the literature on the topic (see also Blumczynski & Wilson, 2022; Lee & Wang, 2022; etc.). With the subtitle of “Challenges and Opportunities”, Liu and Cheung’s opening chapter therefore offers a synthesis of the main issues and demarcates the book’s scope, which profiles new ways that translation and interpreting responded to new modes of working, teaching, and learning imposed by the pandemic. A tripartite format is adopted, comprising a five-chapter section on translation, six chapters on interpreting, and five further chapters devoted to translator and interpreter pedagogy during that unprecedented time.

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Entitled “Reconceptualising Translation in the Age of COVID-19”, the contributions in the first section of the book (Chapters 2-5) all centre on the Chinese linguistic or cultural context. As such, Yufeng Liu and Dechao Li’s chapter provides a comparative analysis of the translation of metaphors in media reports on COVID-19 from Chinese and Western perspectives, which is followed by Chonglong Gu’s study of translation and multilingualism related to the pandemic as reflected in Hong Kong’s unique linguistic landscape. Chapter 4 shifts to the United Kingdom, where Yu Kit Cheung presents a detailed mixed-methods case study of how British government guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 were translated into Chinese, evaluating the selection criteria, script choices, and translation quality. In the section’s closing chapter, Sai Cheong Siu analyses the effectiveness of machine translation models when dealing with material relating to COVID-19 in the English/Chinese language pair.

Interpreting is the focus of the second section (Chapters 6-11), and one of the seminal professional shifts during the pandemic was the transition from face-to-face to remote (i.e. offsite) interpreting. With numbers often seen as potentially problematic in simultaneous interpreting, volume co-editor Andrew K.F. Cheung’s comparative study presents and analyses the results of an experiment involving 43 experienced English/ Chinese interpreters who were working remotely either at home or were based at interpreting hubs. In Chapter 7, Marta Buján and Camille Collard highlight the findings of a large-scale survey on experienced conference interpreters’ views and working habits concerning the pandemic-related uptake of remote simultaneous interpreting. With the questionnaire comprising 61 questions and receiving over 800 responses, the results offer a comprehensive panorama of the profession as a whole. The notion of an evolving profession is also highlighted in Marie Diur and Lucía Ruiz Rosendo’s study at the United Nations, which places attention on how the shift to remote interpreting impacted working life and recruitment testing at the institutional level. Chapter 9 discusses the nascent discipline of humanitarian interpreting, which Lucía Ruiz Rosendo and Maura Radicioni locate both within crisis communication/ translation more generally, and with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic more specifically. Returning to remote simultaneous interpreting, the contribution by Márta Seresi and Petra Lea Láncos delves into the results of ten semi-structured interviews with Hungarian conference interpreters on their professional experiences of teamwork and cooperation in virtual settings. In the final chapter of this section, Deborah Giustini conducts an in-depth literature-based analysis of the interrelationship between remote interpreting and technology from a sociological standpoint.

The last section of the book (Chapters 12-17) focuses on pedagogical aspects and opens with a report by Kanglong Liu, Ho Ling Kwok, and Wenjing Li on a mixed-method survey and interview-based study regarding student perspectives on the hybrid teaching of translation subjects at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In

Nancy Tsai and Damien Fan's chapter, some positive aspects of online translator training with regard to the Chinese cultural context are uncovered as the result of data obtained through course evaluations and student feedback at both an American and a Taiwanese institution. Chapter 14 highlights how translator and interpreter pedagogy in Slovakia adapted to the new realities caused by the pandemic, as Soňa Hodáková and Emília Perez offer analyses obtained not only via a nationwide student questionnaire but also through interview data with staff members responsible for the relevant training. Based on focus groups with students and staff of the postgraduate translation and interpreting programme at the University of Maryland, David B. Sawyer's contribution presents a case study of the pandemic-mandated shift from in-person to online teaching at that institution. A case study approach is also utilised by Chen-En Ho and Yuan Zou, who analyse the results of a student survey conducted at Queen's University Belfast to examine the use of the online platform Gather as a potential aid for distance interpreter training. Finally, in the closing chapter of the section (and of the book as a whole), Nan Zhao profiles several computer-assisted interpreting tools and outlines their pedagogical and practical applications.

This book is an impactful resource examining translation and interpreting during the COVID-19 pandemic in a comprehensive manner. It draws together studies from scholars and practitioners at various universities and international institutions, utilising a diversity of approaches to provide useful and well-articulated insights from different linguistic, disciplinary, and methodological viewpoints. As with many other spheres of professional activity, it is certain that translation and interpreting will undergo wide-ranging changes in order to adapt to society's changing needs in the post-pandemic era (see also Hoyte-West, 2022; Eszenyi, Bednárová-Gibová & Robin, 2023). As such developments continue to influence academia and the labour market, *Translation and Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19* will undoubtedly be an invaluable resource for the academic and professional practice of translation and interpreting as the current century progresses.

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