

Book review

Kanglong Liu AND Andrew K. F. Cheung, eds., *Translation and Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19*

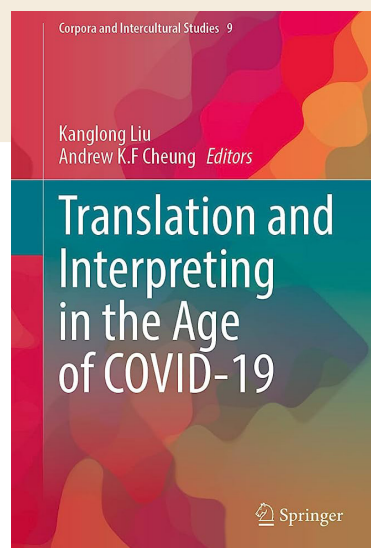
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There is a plethora of scholarly literature assessing the multitude of far-reaching impacts brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic (Declercq & Federici 2020; Gössling et al. 2020; Shrestha et al. 2020; Sikali 2020). Undoubtedly everyone, including the readers of this review article, has witnessed the spillover effect of the pandemic on the social, economic, political, psychological, familial, and interactive planes of our existence. The difficulties and challenges experienced by our individual households are felt in our everyday lives. It makes sense to focus our gaze on the more negative side of the story—but not to see the other side of our shared memories, when lockdowns and disruptive years made it easier for us to be constantly reminded of our human connections in this increasingly globalized world. Against this background, the interdisciplinary book reviewed here serves to bridge this gap and direct us toward more balanced perceptions of the obvious challenges and the hidden opportunities to reshape our world through the empowering and uniting force of languages embedded in translation and interpreting activities on institutional and personal dimensions.

The volume has a clear three-part structure. Part 1 concentrates on the reconceptualization of translation during COVID-19. Each chapter under this section covers a specific aspect or type of translation in COVID-19 communication. The type genres explored in this part include news reports, official documents, government regulations, and public communication in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual settings. The themes discussed in these chapters are stance mediation in human translation



and evaluation of machine translation. In Chapter 1, Liu and Li scrutinize the Chinese–English translation of metaphors in news headlines in mainstream news outlets. Drawing on stance analyses of conceptual metaphors, framing strategies, and attitudinal graduation in COVID-19 reporting in the *Global Times* and *The Economist*, the authors highlight the embedded tension between China and the United States explicated by differences in narratives regarding health prevention measures, which reflects the fact that translation is often perceived as a politically and ideologically charged activity. In Chapter 2, Gu takes a comparative approach to examine multilingual versions of texts translated by government institutions and the private sector in public health communication. The author emphasizes the important role translation has played in promoting public health in multicultural contexts. In Chapter 3, Cheung critiques the general perceptions of Chinese translation in the United Kingdom. By shedding light on the existence of other Chinese language variations in written communication, the author underscores the importance of engaging the traditional Chinese audience in public health communication. In Chapter 4, Siu evaluates the quality of COVID-related machine translation and showcases the usefulness of machine translation in public health emergencies.

Part 2 concentrates on the reconceptualization of interpreting during COVID-19. This part adopts a context-specific approach, with each chapter addressing a particular aspect of interpreting activities embedded in a given mode or setting (consecutive or simultaneous), incorporating balanced perspectives of service users and service providers, both institutional and individual. The issues addressed in this part include 1) teamwork on virtual platforms, 2) technical configuration, 3) humanitarian interpreters in crisis communication, 4) institutional interpreting admission exams at the United Nations, and 5) location and presence, interpreting from home or a hub. In Chapter 5, Cheung assesses the accuracy of numbers in remote simultaneous interpreting. Drawing on interpreting performance data collected from an experiment, the author finds that hub-based interpreters perform better than home-based interpreters, as evidenced by the skillful use of approximation strategies when dealing with numbers. In Chapter 6, Buján and Collard investigate conference interpreters' perceptions of remote interpreting. Drawing on survey data collected from 849 respondents from nineteen countries, the authors reveal new and flexible methods adopted by interpreters to handle remote interpreting assignments because many interpreters in the private market have voiced positive views on the future of remote simultaneous interpreting as a “necessary evil” that will remain (7). In Chapter 7, Diur and Ruiz Rosendo evaluate the changes in admission tests for conference interpreters at the United Nations. Based on archival analysis and personal experience, the authors conclude with a context-specific description of challenges related to working

in COVID-impacted institutional settings. In Chapter 8, Ruiz Rosendo and Radicioni shift attention to COVID-afflicted humanitarian aid settings. The authors pique readers' interest by enriching the understanding of the emerging area of translation and interpreting studies. In Chapter 9, Seresi and Láncoš elucidate the inner working of teamwork in remote simultaneous interpreting between human interpreters. Drawing on interview data, the authors identify the tendency of non-engagement or collaboration in this particular mode, considering technical difficulties and operability. However, interpreters have also been capable of devising alternative coping strategies for competent and ethically aware performance. In Chapter 10, Giustini explores the sociological aspect of technology-enabled remote interpreting activities in response to COVID-19. Drawing on analyses of industry sources and market surveys, the author invites critical reflection on technology-mediated communication by drawing several emerging issues to readers' attention.

Part 3 touches on the teaching aspect of translation and interpreting during COVID-19. The themes and topics explored in this part include 1) students' perceptions and experience in hybrid classrooms, 2) space, power, social presence, and culture-related multimodal learning, 3) educational design, learning activities, and assessment in remote learning and teaching mode, 4) preferences of instruction mode for graduate-level programs: in-person versus remote, 5) technology-empowered teaching design using the application Gather, and 6) computer-assisted interpreting tools. In Chapter 11, Liu et al. evaluate students' perceptions of hybrid teaching during COVID. By analyzing survey and interview data, the authors find that most students could benefit more in hybrid mode, despite technological limitations. In Chapter 12, Tsai and Fan propose the notion of social presence in translation and interpreting teaching by exploring students' perceptions of online learning experiences. In Chapter 13, Hodáková and Perez conduct a case study of educators and learners at Slovak universities. Using survey and interview instruments, the authors reveal the strengths and limitations of the remote teaching mode in translation and interpreting studies. In Chapter 14, Sawyer investigates graduate students' attitudes toward in-person and remote learning. Based on focus group studies, the author shows that students prefer the preservation of an online component because the online mode provides more flexibility for them to manage their studies. In Chapter 15, Ho and Zou explore the feasibility of implementing technology-assisted educational design in online consecutive and simultaneous interpreting teaching. By using the proximity-based platform Gather, the authors found that most participants expressed positive views regarding the use of features to overcome the limitations of Zoom and other video-conferencing platforms. In the last chapter, Zhao reviews the role of computer-assisted interpreting and training applications in pre-task and

in-task learning activities and points to the future use of assistive technologies in teaching settings and beyond.

The book is written in a very accessible style with academic rigor. With a diverse readership in mind, one clear strength of this book is its culturally and linguistically inclusive approach to emerging trends in professional activities and teaching settings, marked by the versatile use of methodological tools. The book boldly embraces linguistic diversity and cultural-geographic inclusion, including Slovak, Chinese, and English and language variations in North America, Europe, and Asia.

The book contributes to the reconceptualization of translation and interpreting activities embedded in crisis communication and the redesign of teaching in training and formal education settings. Conceptually, the edited volume highlights the less-articulated social commitments, civic engagements, and responsibilities of translation and interpreting as a tool to promote social justice and linguistic equity in ethnically and culturally diverse societies. For example, the stance embraced by many contributors to the book is the role of translation and interpreting as a catalyst for social changes in public health communication. This role is manifested through appropriate translation and interpreting activities conducted by competent and ethically aware professionals in a culturally responsive and linguistically inclusive manner. The benefits created by advocating the social function of translation and interpreting become evident in increased public health awareness, enhanced pandemic preparedness, and mitigated risks in some regions.

Methodologically, the contributors to this volume show the immense potential resulting from the cross-fertilization of research methods in neighboring disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. These instruments and tools include but are not limited to corpora, ethnographic interviews, anthropological inquiries, and critical discourse analysis.

From the teaching perspective, several educator-scholars in translation and interpreting studies have enriched the understanding of technology-assisted teaching experiences in various formats of course delivery: online, face-to-face, or hybrid. By highlighting immediacy, privacy, intimacy, and democracy in technology-enabled co-teaching and learning experiences, the contributors have shared their views on the necessity of technological familiarization and orientation toward soft or transferrable skill-building in the educational context. For example, a common perspective held by the authors is that future translators and interpreters will no longer merely be language professionals with employable language knowledge and specialized expertise that enable them to work in different modes (consecutive or simultaneous) and modalities of interpreting (audio-only or audiovisual), particularly in remote settings. In global

pandemic communication, many conference interpreters must include time-management skills because interpreters might be requested to work remotely across different time zones for live speeches and pre-recorded speeches. Therefore, the book leaves readers with some critical reflections on re-imagining their role as human translators in the post-pandemic world, which is operating under constant advances in artificial intelligence and automation.

Because of its discussion of these issues, this book is a useful reference for educators, linguists, present and future translators and interpreters, scholars, and researchers in applied linguistics, translation and interpreting studies, global development, social justice, and beyond.

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About the author

Ran Yi is a doctoral researcher at UNSW Sydney, Australia. She is also a certified practitioner (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, China) with over seven years of experience as a staff interpreter in organisational and institutional settings. Inspired by family members serving in the judiciary as a judge and an attorney, she is keenly interested in promoting social justice through linguistic equity for multilingual populations in court through mixed-methods interdisciplinary research.