

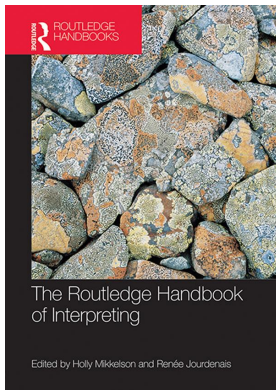
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## The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting

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### Introduction

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# INTRODUCTION

*Renée Jourdenais and Holly Mikkelson*

Interpreting is an activity that has been practiced since time immemorial, but only recently has it been viewed as a field of academic study in and of itself. From our perspective working in an institution that has been training interpreters for half a century, we have noted a growing interest in interpreting studies, driven by national and international needs for qualified interpreters in all domains: from international organizations, to private sector enterprises, and to public service organizations. We have also seen a corresponding increase in short programs and academic course offerings designed to introduce people to and train them for careers as interpreters. Some of these training programs reside in universities, while others are offered by community organizations or enterprising businesses. This increased desire for training has come to our attention through countless inquiries from prospective trainees and from other institutions seeking guidance on setting up programs. Thus, we have first-hand awareness of the important need to prepare interpreters well for the specialized sectors in which they will be employed. The need for qualified interpreters spans all domains: legal, medical, business, educational, political, governmental, academic, to name just a few. And each of these domains has nuances particular to it, whether it is the language-combination needs of the international organizations, the growing ethical concerns in the public service sectors, the challenge of integrating new technologies into the field, or the need for cost-effective interpreting – which happens to cross all domains. We felt that a volume that would introduce readers to recent issues in interpreting, to the many areas of professional work in the field, and to the particular needs and challenges of each, as well as to newly developing areas in which interpreters work, would be of great value.

Perhaps ironically, at a time when the need for well-trained interpreters is being recognized – particularly in the United States – we have also noted that language studies programs are at a critical juncture in this country, with fewer students studying languages, yet greater articulated needs from government and industry for competent multilingual professionals. As a result, many US-based language programs are striving to identify professional opportunities for their students, and those of us committed to the training of interpreters are striving to keep students interested in learning languages by showing students that the field of interpreting can provide an array of career possibilities. Countries around the world are, in fact, struggling to meet the needs of the interpretation industry. Sometimes this is due to large numbers of interpreter retirees in the “baby boomer” generation; other times this may be due to increased visibility in the global

community, and still others, we are sad to say, perhaps due to less than ideal working conditions for interpreters – which the field is actively trying to remedy.

Given the diversity of the field and the various reasons for which interpreters may be in demand, we have designed this volume with a varied readership in mind. We envision this book as a valuable resource for current professionals in the field who would like to be updated on areas of growth in interpreting, and an important resource for language professors and students or young professionals (both BA-level and MA-level) who are interested in exploring these exciting career opportunities and would like to identify which area of the field is “right” for them. We also hope that this overview of the many areas the interpreting field covers may assist those language professors who have been asked to expand their offerings in order to introduce interpreting to their students. And we would like to inspire those committed to the interpreting field to note the areas needed for growth and development and to actively work to enhance this rewarding profession.

To ensure that the volume is accessible to this range of readership, we have asked all of the contributing authors to provide a brief historical look at their area of focus, a description of the current state of the field from their particular perspective, and their thoughts as to where this segment of the field may be headed. We have also ensured that terms and concepts are well-defined, and that the chapters build upon one another, with as little duplication as possible, in the case that the book is read in its entirety. We have also asked authors to provide a list of “Further reading” for those who may be interested in pursuing these topics in more depth.

### Design of the volume

As noted above, interpreting studies is a relatively young field. The first definitive work on this subject, *Introducing Interpreting Studies* (Pöchhacker 2004), was published by Routledge just 10 years ago. Drawing largely on the field of translation studies (Venuti [2000] 2012; Munday [2001] 2012; Baker [1998] 2011; Snell-Hornby 1988), Pöchhacker defines interpreting as “translational activity,” a special form of translation that is distinguished by its temporal immediacy (2004:9). Rather than confine the definition to mere “oral translation,” as many have done, he views the field more broadly to encompass signed as well as spoken languages. He also looks at the phenomenon from a historical perspective and categorizes different types of interpreting according to the “social context of interaction, or setting” in which it occurs (*ibid.*:13). Another approach to defining the field is by modality (spoken or signed/visual, consecutive or simultaneous, etc.), directionality (uni- or bilateral, relay, etc.) or use of technology (remote or face-to-face, etc.). Pöchhacker concludes his analysis of the scope of interpreting by identifying eight dimensions in the “map” of interpreting: (1) medium, (2) setting, (3) mode, (4) languages (cultures), (5) discourse, (6) participants, (7) interpreter qualifications and (8) problem, i.e., component skills, challenges, and so on (*ibid.*:23–4). In this volume, although we have decided to use the term “interpreting” alone without the “studies” label, we have attempted to cover all of the dimensions identified by Pöchhacker in his comprehensive description.

In order to ensure that readers have the most complete view possible of the field, we sought to include a chapter for what we envision to be each of the core areas important to the interpreting profession. We then organized the volume into four parts: I. Historical Perspectives, II. Modes of Interpreting, III. Interpreting Settings, and IV. Issues and Debates.

In the first part of the volume, Historical Perspectives, we situate both the profession and the many who impact it, including professional organizations, international employers, and researchers. We begin the volume with Jesús Baigorri-Jalón’s historical overview of the field of interpreting in which he traces the interpreting field from some of its earliest known references

in Ancient Egypt through the Lewis and Clark expeditions of the 19th century, into the advent of interpreting technologies associated with the Nuremberg Trials, and to the remote interpreting opportunities that present themselves today This chapter is then followed by Julie Boéri's look at key internal players within the interpreting field and the ways that they have shaped and continue to define the profession. Her examination includes the roles that professional organizations, training bodies, and the academic community have played in determining the directions of the field. She also looks at those more on the "margins" of these traditional influencers who are also having an impact on the shaping of the interpreting profession. Sofia García-Beyaert follows Boéri's internal perspective with a case study examination of external factors that have contributed, both positively and negatively, to the development of the profession. Her three cases include the role a professional organization has played, the development of the sign language interpreting profession, and the de-professionalization of court interpreting in Europe. Through the exploration of these case studies, García-Beyaert examines the many external factors that have shaped and continue to shape the profession. Franz Pöchhacker's chapter, the final contribution in this section, then addresses the evolution of interpreting research. His work explores the many research strands that have contributed to our growing understanding of the practice of interpreting. He concludes the chapter with the major current trends and key challenges that can be expected to dominate research on interpreting in its different modes, modalities and domains in the years ahead.

Part II of this volume places emphasis on the different modalities of interpreting. We have attempted to be inclusive of all the modes in which today's interpreters may find themselves working. We begin with a chapter by Kilian Seeber on simultaneous interpreting. In this chapter, Seeber discusses how this modality has come to be one of the most widely used in the field of conference interpreting. The complexity and difficulty of the task are discussed, as are many of the factors that contribute to these task features. Also addressed are some of the underlying constructs of simultaneous interpreting, such as memory and language proficiency, as well as the role that technology has played – and will continue to play – in shaping the future of this interpreting modality. The next chapter focuses on consecutive interpreting. Kayoko Takeda and Debra Russell present the issues that impact effective consecutive interpreting, including cognitive and linguistic variables and the importance of good note-taking. They explore both the monologic and dialogic environments in which consecutive interpreting is used, highlighting the manner in which a dialogic interpreting event is co-created by the participants involved – importantly, now seen as inclusive of the interpreter. Karen Bontempo's chapter presents the history of signed language interpreting and underscores some of the unique demands inherent in working in two different language modalities (signed and spoken, i.e., visual and auditory). A discussion of the many domains in which signed language interpreting is used highlights its pervasiveness throughout the Deaf community and the needs for quality training in the field. This chapter is followed by one by Jemina Napier, in which she focuses on the ways in which sign language interpreting both parallels and differs from spoken language interpreting.

The final chapters in this section address the interactions between interpreters and written texts. First is Wallace Chen's contribution on sight translation, a hybrid mode that combines written texts and oral translation. He examines how sight translation differs from written translation, and explores both pedagogical and professional applications of this mode. Since sight translation has been used extensively in language learning and interpreter training, he focuses particularly on where it belongs in the curriculum. He concludes with a discussion of innovative pedagogical applications of this modality and research in sight translation. Finally, Carmen Valero-Garcés addresses the transcription and translation of spoken discourse in a variety of settings. Although this modality has myriad applications in a variety of disciplines, relatively

little research has been done on the topic. The chapter examines the theoretical and practical issues involved in transcribing and translating for different purposes, and then makes best practice recommendations and suggests future avenues for research. Thus, through the chapters in Part II, we hope the reader will gain an understanding of the skills required of interpreters in the different modes, the specific applications of those skills, and the impacts of technology on their use.

Part III of the volume shows how these particular modes of interpreting may be used in the many specialized settings in which interpreters work. Each author provides a brief historical look at interpreting in the respective setting and discusses the many issues and challenges that arise as practitioners focus on a particular interpretation in a particular setting. Ebru Diriker begins the discussion with an overview of conference interpreting. She looks at the professionalization of the field, echoing earlier chapters on the history of the profession and key internal and external players but with a particular focus on international organizations. Conference interpreting has been the subject of more research than other types of interpreting, and this chapter presents some of the key studies that have been conducted. It concludes with an analysis of what the future holds for this rapidly changing sector. In the next chapter, Jieun Lee then analyzes the unique challenges associated with court interpreting, in which interpreters work hand in hand with legal professionals at the intersection of disparate legal systems. She explores the ways in which the legal community both facilitates and shapes the role of the interpreter at both international and national levels, and then reports the findings of research in the field. She notes that the quality of interpreting has been a subject of particular interest in the court interpreting community, given the high stakes involved in court proceedings – a discussion which foregrounds the chapter on quality that comes in the fourth section of the book. In the next chapter, Sonja Pöllabauer examines a particular kind of legal interpreting, that which occurs in asylum proceedings, and explores the many ethical issues that arise there. In light of the rising tide of migration throughout the world, spurred by economic disruptions, social upheavals and eruptions of violence, interpreters are on the front lines in the struggle to meet the challenges associated with refugees seeking asylum in developed countries. Pöllabauer's analysis of the linguistic, cultural and psychological aspects of the interpreter's role in this fraught environment therefore makes a key contribution to this volume's overview of the interpreting field. In the following chapter, Marjory Bancroft introduces community interpreting, an activity that continues to expand along with the aforementioned growth of international migration. Community-based interpreting covers a much broader realm than asylum interpreting, since it addresses the needs not only of refugees but also those of immigrants in general, as well as those faced by indigenous groups who avail themselves of public services; but in truth many of the issues faced by interpreters in these settings are similar to those that arise in asylum proceedings. Bancroft's analysis of the driving forces behind this burgeoning field, including language policy and language access laws, sets the stage for an exploration of the complex role of interpreters in various community settings. She also looks at the training of community interpreters and makes recommendations for increased professionalization of the field.

The next three chapters in this section continue to delve into the interpreting services provided by specialist interpreters in some of the environments touched upon by Bancroft, namely, healthcare, mental health and education. First, Cynthia Roat and Ineke Crezee examine the role of interpreters in medical settings, including the cultural bridging that may be required in addition to the more typical language mediation in encounters between patients and highly trained healthcare specialists due to the frequent use of technical terms and jargon. The authors use the United States as a basis for discussing patterns of development in this ever-expanding profession, including standards of practice, regulation, training and certification. In the following

chapter, Hanneke Bot narrows the focus to a subcategory of healthcare interpreting, mental health interpreting, which also intersects at times with court or legal interpreting. Given the critical role of language in the diagnosis and treatment of mental patients, the provision of competent interpreting services is an essential element in what ideally should be a collaborative effort between professionals. In her analysis of different types of mental health encounters, Bot discusses the implications of research on interpreted communication and the influence interpreters can have on outcomes. She presents a continuum of possible positions, from interpreter as mechanical conduit to interpreter as co-therapist, and highlights the need for awareness of the potential for unintended consequences as interpreters intervene, to varying degrees, in the therapeutic process. She argues that this awareness can only be developed with more extensive training for both interpreters and mental health professionals so that they can ensure the best possible outcome for their patients. Similarly, Melissa Smith argues for more extensive training of interpreters who work in educational settings where they have a critical impact on learning and thus on the future of the individuals for whom they interpret. Her discussion includes the use of interpreters for students in primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as adults in vocational training and court-mandated classes. After describing the function of interpreters in various learning environments and in ancillary interactions, such as parent-teacher communications, she reports on research findings and their implications for policy decisions with respect interpreter qualifications.

The last two chapters in Part III branch out into two relatively new areas of interpreting that have received little attention from scholars thus far. First, Pedro Castillo discusses interpreting in the mass media, a growing field that is changing just as rapidly as is the technology supporting it. He presents a systematic analysis of how interpreters are recruited, where they may be asked to perform their services, and how the interpreted interactions are then organized and eventually broadcast in a vast array of events communicated through different media. Castillo emphasizes best practices throughout the chapter, and concludes by suggesting approaches for training interpreters for this highly specialized field and by recommending new avenues of research. The final setting presented in Part III is that of conflict zones, a lamentably growing area requiring interpreting services. In this chapter, Barbara Moser-Mercer defines what constitutes a conflict and outlines the measures that have been taken to protect interpreters in the midst of humanitarian disasters and military actions. She analyzes the implications of research findings and ethical considerations from other sectors, such as conference, court and community interpreting, for interpreting practice in conflict zones, and makes recommendations for policy-making, training and research for those who enter this challenging field.

The fourth section of the volume steps back from the minute analysis of specific modalities and settings of interpreting in order to explore the broader issues and debates ongoing in the field as a whole. Uldis Ozolins begins this section with a chapter on the challenging topic of ethics in interpreting situations, where interpreters become privy to highly confidential information and participate in very sensitive interactions that are often filled with emotion. He traces the development of ethical standards in different types of interpreting and then focuses on key issues that are still unresolved, describing the main positions adopted by theorists and practitioners across the range of interpreting sectors. Justine Ndong-Keller delves into one of the most difficult ethical dilemmas faced by interpreters, dealing with vicarious trauma during and after assignments that require them to relay messages reflecting the very worst aspects of human behavior: extreme violence and emotional abuse. Drawing on her own experience interpreting in the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda, she examines the impact of these interactions on interpreters' personal lives, and then presents relevant research findings with a view to developing methods of preventing vicarious trauma, to the extent possible,

through awareness-raising and training of all actors involved, and to optimizing the care and treatment of interpreters who nevertheless experience this type of trauma.

The growing influence of technology on interpreting, including both its pluses and minuses, is addressed in Sabine Braun's chapter on remote interpreting. As many of the authors point out in this volume, technological changes are driving human communication in completely new directions, and the interpreters involved in such communication must keep up with a rapidly evolving array of devices and media that enable virtual interactions across vast distances. Braun surveys different interpreting settings and the impact of remote interpreting on all participants, but most particularly on interpreters themselves and their performance, as reflected in research in the field. She concludes with recommendations for further research, which in turn will inform the policies and training programs that must be developed to ensure quality interpreting in virtual environments. Increasing interest in the quality of interpreting and ways in which it is assessed by both interpreters and the users of interpreting are examined in the next chapter by Ángela Collados-Aís and Olalla García Becerra. They begin with a discussion of what quality is and, in fact, how difficult it is to define this surprisingly elusive concept. They then examine studies that have been conducted over the years to identify criteria for measuring quality and to develop methods of enhancing quality through proper training.

Continuing with the theme of quality, Jean Turner then discusses in the next chapter what some of these quality measures mean for the overall assessment of interpreters for different purposes. Noting the growing awareness of the need for competent interpreting and the ensuing rising interest in interpreter assessment, she looks at current practices in interpreter testing for certification and for admission to academic programs. Turner identifies the issues and challenges that have arisen in these contexts, and concludes by pointing out that recent publications have reported on assessment practices at different stages of interpreter training and of professional development, providing ample material for further research and improvement of assessment tools. In the next chapter, Chuanyun Bao describes the many ways in which interpreters are educated for the profession. He provides examples of topics addressed in the curricula of a small number of the hundreds of interpreter training programs that now exist throughout the world, some of them decades old and some founded mere months ago. Although the trend is increasingly toward graduate-level professional programs, there are also a plethora of short courses, certificate programs, orientation workshops and refresher courses being developed. Bao examines different modalities of presentation, ranging from traditional face-to-face instruction to blended or hybrid courses, to completely online programs, as well as a growing number of train-the-trainer programs aimed at alleviating the shortage of qualified instructors in these training programs. The role of non-professional interpreters in the field is both recognized and highlighted by Aída Martínez-Gómez in the chapter that follows. This is another area that has received scant attention from scholars and in fact has been excoriated by both academicians and practitioners, despite its ubiquity. The author points out that it is much more constructive to study the work of non-professional or *ad hoc* interpreters in order to shed more light on all aspects of interpreting. She reports on recent studies of this population from various points of view and emphasizes the value of taking a more inclusive approach in order to legitimize all kinds of interpreting and enhance understanding of the profession as a whole. The final contribution to this comprehensive survey of the interpreting profession comes from Mette Rudvin, whose chapter on professional identity examines how members of a profession construct their identities through a complex, interactive process, and then discusses how that process has taken place in the interpreting profession in particular. She concludes with an analysis of the implications for training interpreters and some predictions about future trends.

We, the volume editors, then provide a brief final chapter with a synopsis of the topics and issues raised throughout the book and future directions for the field as highlighted by our contributing authors.

### Our objectives for this volume

We hope that this comprehensive overview of the field of interpreting will give a voice to those who are actively engaged in interpreting, highlighting for non-interpreters the skills and challenges involved in this demanding field, and thereby leading to increased appreciation for work well done.

Our goal is for those who love learning languages to realize that their passions can lead to rewarding career opportunities, and we hope that they will find an area – or perhaps even two! – which have particularly piqued their interest and desire for further exploration.

Another key objective of this volume is that researchers from varied perspectives will recognize the wide range of research opportunities the field offers and contribute to the nascent, yet growing awareness of just what is involved in the activity of interpreting. The authors have each highlighted challenges facing each sector and we hope that by drawing attention to the issues interpreters face, we will find it easier to solve them.

We also hope to contribute to the growing professionalization of this field, which, although existing for thousands of years, has only more recently seemed to come into the awareness of the broader public.

And above all, it is our hope that readers will enjoy learning about a field that often sits just below the radar – behind a glass booth, next to a government figurehead, between a doctor and patient, next to an asylum seeker, or is simply “a voice” heard over a news broadcast – and realize that interpreters dedicate their professional lives to ensuring that we are able to communicate successfully across the globe.

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