

Hale, Sandra Beatriz, Uldis Ozolins and Ludmila Stern, eds. *The Critical Link 5. Quality in Interpreting – A Shared Responsibility*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009 (pp 255). ISBN 978 90 272 2431 6

Although duly addressing public service interpreting, the collection *Critical Link 5* also includes articles that will surely draw the attention of the interpreting community at large. As quality assurance has become a requisite in most professional settings, including conference and community interpreting, the selected articles cover both major areas; undoubtedly, the authors of the selection – Sandra Hale, Uldis Ozolins and Ludmila Stern – chose deliberately the open-ended title “Quality in interpreting – a shared responsibility”. At the same time, they advocate a much needed awareness-raising on the various roles and responsibilities not just of the interpreters but of all actors involved in this complex interaction that is bound to provide quality in the service of multilingual populations.

The contributions are organised along three main sections: Part I: Quality in interpreting: a shared responsibility – the policy dimension; Part II: Investigations and innovations in quality interpreting; and Part III: Pedagogy, ethics and responsibility in interpreting.

The first section addresses “the macro environment of specific social policy contexts” (4). Grounded on case law, Justice Len Roberts-Smith’s article “Forensic Interpreting: Trial and Error” rightly highlights the misgivings of inadequate provisions for interpretation that, more often than not, result in injustice. With exceptional insight into the work of interpreters, the voice of a judge is all the more authoritative when making strong recommendations for the way forward in achieving quality through cooperation between the two professions. Although region-specific and somewhat limited in scope, Eva N.S. Ng’s article dealing with “the tension between adequacy and acceptability in legal interpreting and translation” in Hong Kong is an illustration of the way in which common law interferes with linguistics. Semantic analysis leads the author to quite philosophical considerations on the “equity” of a bilingual legal system. It takes a non-European to bravely discuss the rituals of simultaneous interpreting in the European Parliament as “[a] discourse of danger and loss”. In the framework of cultural communication theory, Stephanie Jo Kent conducts a survey among EP interpreters testing her hypothesis according to which “policies and resources are often skewed to provide for abstracted institutional processes more than for the living imperatives of individuals interacting with agents of governmental and social institutions” (57). While

trying to answer the question whether the healthcare interpreting policy in Australia is left in the seventies, Pamela W. Garret studies a pilot hospital and provides challenging suggestions on grounds of the shift from access and equity (in the 70s and 80s) to efficiency, effectiveness, health outcomes and patient safety (today).

Part II “reveals a number of admirable cases of interpreters working together with their client institutions” (6). Starting from a specific context (Aboriginal languages interpreting), the conclusions drawn by Michael S. Cooke in his article “Interpreter Ethics versus Customary Law” prove more far-reaching than their author might have suspected, as emphasis is given to the interpreter’s active role as a cultural broker or a go-between, something which, unfortunately, tends to be overlooked. Similarly, based on a study of asylum review hearings, the article “Interpreting for the Record”, by Pöchhacker and Kolb, highlights the degree of intervention interpreters assume in the proceedings and mostly in the written record of such hearings. Clearly, the “collaborative relationship or mutual orientation” (127) between interpreter and clerk needs a multi-perspective consideration. Extremely informative, Gonzalez and Auzmendi’s article on the challenges of court interpreting in Basque presents both the status of the profession in Basque Country and a quantitative-qualitative study drawing on previous research available in Basque language only and on trial corpora covering several years. Aiming at furthering the professionalisation of community interpreting in Spain, Ortega Herrea, Abril Martí and Martín summarise a wider series of studies on interpreters’ self perception as conducted by the GRETI research group. Carefully profiling interpreters’ roles according to settings (legal and police being more formal induce higher ethics, whereas healthcare and social interpreting are volunteer-based and intuitive) and to the degree of “non-professional” intervention, they conclude with solid recommendations that should be readily extrapolated to other countries as well.

The third section discusses pedagogy and ethics. Jieun Lee tackles the conundrum of interpreter assessment and proposes a rating scale tested through a pilot study. While the article provides useful definitions of assessment criteria, it stands as a reminder for the need to contain subjectivity in interpreter assessment and, in so doing, further research on rating methods becomes a must. Merlini and Favaron make a daring plea for critical thinking in healthcare interpreting, which should be “proactive, self-revealing and collaborative” (188). Their study is based on transcript analysis and focuses on the choice interpreters make between the first person rule and indirect speech, depending on the specific interactional context. Highly instructive, Helen Tebble’s article “What Can Interpreters Learn from Discourse Studies?” emphasises the socio-linguistic importance of the speech event. Although leading her demonstration in the medical setting, the author points to some principles crucial to any interpreter training: “If you are familiar with your road map (the genre of the interpreted event) you know where you are going” (210). Moreover, a professional must be able to account for his/her work, hence discourse analysis is an indispensable tool. Blignault, Stephanou and Barrett’s article is part of a larger qualitative study designed to explore the work of healthcare

interpreting in the Australian system from the interpreter's perspective. The survey is conducted along three theme lines: professionalism, scope and job satisfaction to conclude on the difficulties in decision-making as "high quality is achieved by operating effectively within the 'grey areas' [...] even though this can be contentious" (232). In their article "Research ethics, interpreters and biomedical research", Canadian experts Kaufert, Kaufert and LaBine deal with a sub-category of interpreters, namely those who work for research. This interview-based chapter seeks to explore the specifics of this group as compared to medical interpreters and, on the other hand, the way research ethics compare with interpreter ethical codes. While in this particular context it appears that interpreters should mediate the (often cultural) gap between the researcher and the research subject/community, researchers and research authorities themselves should become more aware of the complex role of language in research.

Some might argue that most of the *Critical Link 5* volume deals with issues localised to Australia; however the analyses run deep and keywords such as cultural broker, self-assessment, awareness raising, professionalisation, norms, ethics, training, emerge from most papers regardless of the specifics. Thus, yet again, the *Critical Link* papers provide ample food for thought for interpreters, trainers and trainees, as well as service providers worldwide.

Izabella Badiu
Babes-Bolyai University Cluj, Romania