BOOK REVIEWS

Franz Pöchhacker and Miriam Shlesinger (eds.), *The Interpreting Studies Reader*, London & New York, Routledge, 436 p., ISBN 0-415-22478-0.

On the market there are a few anthologies of selections from the "classics" of translation studies, some taking a historical approach, some giving more emphasis to theoretical issues, others focusing on "applied" aspects, but to date no such collection has been published in the field of Interpreting Studies. We should therefore be grateful to Routledge and to *Translation and Interpreting Studies Series* Advisory Editor Mona Baker for supporting Franz Pöchhacker and Miriam Shlesinger's project of an *Interpreting Studies Reader*, intended as a counterpart to Lawrence Venuti's successful *Translation Studies Reader*, as a section of which the collection was originally conceived.

What has resulted is a rich and comprehensive anthology, offering an overview of the development of the interpreting discipline and the profession, as well as an exhaustive state-of-the-art account of research in this field. While the selection of texts is in itself representative of the most significant writings in IS so far, the picture is made even clearer and more exhaustive by the careful and well thought-out accompanying commentaries, thus affording a more comprehensive perspective. Thanks to the in-depth introductory essay and the *ad hoc* introduction which opens each section of the anthology, the material is organised into a coherent overall picture. Each text is also preceded by background information about its author, helping to contextualise it.

Of course, in cases like this selecting texts can be a difficult, even painful, process and it is inevitable that the finished product should do full justice only to some aspects, sidelining others or leaving them only partially represented. In this respect, it is essential that the criteria of choice be made thoroughly clear. Here, they are illustrated in detail in the opening essay. The volume includes both theoretical and empirical (observational as well as experimental) studies, thus mirroring the "double soul" of the discipline. It also covers a wide spectrum of paradigms and methods - based on theoretical considerations, cognitive psychology, text linguistics, discourse analysis or sociolinguistics - as well as the different modes of interpreting - consecutive, simultaneous, *liaison.* The field of signed-language interpretation is also covered. Of course, much has had to be excluded, notably works dealing with specifically epistemological issues, interpreter training, professional ecology and neuropsychological-neurolinguistic paradigms. However, what has been lost in breadth of spectrum has been gained

in terms of depth of coverage and coherence of overall structure. In particular, the selection has privileged two categories of texts: the "classics" of the discipline, providing a diachronic account of its establishment and growth, and works representing research orientations with strong potential for future development.

Interestingly, the anthology also includes works which to date have been relatively inaccessible, in particular examples of early research in this field or writings so far available only in languages other than English, which are offered in translation for the first time. These include A. Hermann's diachronic account of the origins of interpreting, P. Oléron and H. Nanpon's historic essay on "Research into Simultaneous Translation", and other seminal essays by H. Kirchhoff, D. Seleskovitch and A. Collados Aís.

If fault can be found with the selection of texts for the volume, it regards the works of the editors themselves: Pöchhacker and Shlesinger have contributed substantially to the development of the IS discipline and the volume would certainly have benefitted from the inclusion of a selection of their most significant studies.

Preceded by a short section on the early history of interpreting, the first Part presents some pioneering contributions by authors whom the editors define "ground-breakers", mostly psychologists and psycholinguists who took up interpreting as an object of research for the first time and focused in particular on synchronicity patterns between source- and target-text in simultaneous interpretation and on error analysis.

The next two sections, "Laying Foundations" and "Modeling the Process", feature works published from the late 1960s to the turn of the millennium, essentially aimed at constructing models of the interpreting process. These are situated at different levels of abstraction and take a variety of theoretical approaches.

The advent of a wider perspective, investigating the situational, interactional and sociocultural aspects of interpreting, is illustrated in the works collected in Part Four, while the following section features contributions representative of a product-oriented approach to interpreting, using text linguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics or a socio-semiotic approach to analyse the interpreter's output within a communication-oriented framework.

The essays collected in Part Six provide a significant sample of approaches on quality assessment, illustrating both the increasing interest in users' expectations and the "norms" guiding the different subjects involved in interpetation - not only interpreters' professional norms, but also users' "expectancy norms".

Part Seven takes up the crucial issue of the interpreter's role and related deontological dilemmas in a context where new professional profiles have

emerged and conference interpreting is now part of a much more complex picture, including community interpreting, medical interpreting, signed-language interpreting, media interpreting etc.

The volume is closed by an essay by M. Cronin, evaluating the cultural and ideological importance of the interpreting profession, at odds with the "minorisation" of IS within the context of translation studies. Such a view ultimately advocates a shift towards a politically self-aware "material/cultural theory of interpreting", which may restore it to the position it deserves.

This final appeal helps highlight the fact that the *Interpreting Studies Reader* is not only an invaluable source of information for scholars, students and practitioners alike, but itself testifies to the dignity and growing prestige of IS as an autonomous, fully fledged discipline.

Giuliana Garzone

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Giuliana Garzone and Maurizio Viezzi (2001), *Comunicazione specialistica e interpretazione di conferenza*, Edizioni Università di Trieste, 231 p., ISBN 88-8303-081-8.

This book is an important addition to the literature on conference interpreting, in that it analyses language, rhetoric and formal conventions in two of the most prominent discourse types on the professional interpreter's agenda. Giuliana Garzone examines technical and scientific discourse, while Maurizio Viezzi focuses on political discourse. Both studies analyse distinctive features of these discourse types from the interpreter's point of view, with practical examples of how professional and trainee interpreters manage the two genres. The book thus offers useful insight into two major components of interpreting – the source speech which the interpreter is required to convey, and how s/he actually fares in doing so. The only part of the overall process not examined in detail is how the specialist interpreter's production is then perceived by delegates, but this is a topic of study in its own right and the authors have understandably taken a different perspective. At the same time, there is some discussion of the issue in both studies, with major surveys of user expectations briefly reviewed by Garzone (pp. 114-115) and user reactions inevitably taken into account in Viezzi's analysis of quality.

Both authors refer essentially to examples of simultaneous interpreting from English to Italian, and sensibly make no sweeping claims as to just how far the principles they highlight fit other languages and cultures. However, the interest of examining issues such as the structure and style of technical, scientific or

political discourse surely extends beyond the language combination on which the book focuses.

Giuliana Garzone's study comprises three chapters – an introduction to the conventions and features of conference speeches, a detailed account of scientific and technical discourse, and an analysis of relevant issues for the interpreter. The focus on interpreting issues includes comments on a small sample of professional and trainee performances. Apart from considerations on major features such as the macrostructure of specialist discourse and the linguistic features which contribute to its often impersonal nature, the study offers interesting insight into issues such as reinforcing and hedging strategies. There is also a case study in which a number of English texts from a gemmology congress are literally "checked against delivery", i.e. compared with the recording of what the speakers actually said. This makes it possible to identify the various types of departure and gloss that can complicate the task of simultaneous interpreting with the speaker's text available in the booth. In focusing on points such as these, Garzone's analysis reflects the considerable scope for investigation of specific variables in the interpreting process.

Maurizio Viezzi's account of interpreting political discourse is also divided into three chapters – an introduction to political discourse, a detailed presentation of Viezzi's approach to quality evaluation, and a thorough illustration of how the interpreter might analyse a sample of political discourse (the example being a speech by Tony Blair). The chapter on quality assessment includes a case study of how a trainee interpreter actually fared in interpreting another speech by Tony Blair into Italian. Apart from the author's feel for the nuances of political speech, and his telling examples of how to read between the lines of the speaker's script, he argues a convincing case for not considering the tenets of the *théorie du sens* applicable to the language of politics and diplomacy. A variety of examples illustrate how the political interpreter's brief involves far more subtlety than plain statement of the speaker's (presumed) *vouloir dire* – though, interestingly, the reader can only conjecture whether the strategy of the English booth famously baffled by Ciriaco De Mita's "impenetrable" oratory was form-based or meaning-based!

Minor criticisms of the book stem more from its presentation than from its content. First, an index of key concepts and proper names would have been useful, as both studies contain a wealth of information not usually found in mainstream publications on Interpreting Studies. Second, the two bibliographies could perhaps have been combined to avoid a certain amount of overlap.

Such criticisms are essentially formal quibbles, which detract little if at all from this reviewer's unreservedly positive response to the book. It offers a great deal of interest to theoreticians and practicians alike – not only as complementary reading for conference interpreting courses, but also as a very

readable source of information on text linguistics and genre analysis for research projects such as those covered in theses and dissertations at many interpreting schools.

In conclusion, it is a shame that the language of publication restricts the book's potential readership, as these studies deserve to be widely read. At the same time, it is interesting to see this as an example of how the literature on conference interpreting is by no means limited to more widely read languages like English and French. The range and quality of books, articles and dissertations available to an Italian readership affords a striking example of the contribution which different national or linguistic schools make to Interpreting Studies.

Peter Mead