

**Valero-Garcés, Carmen (2014). *Communicating Across Cultures. A Coursebook on Interpreting and Translating in Public Services and Institutions*. Lanham/Plymouth: University Press of America® Inc., pp. 207, €23.91. ISBN 978 0 7618 6154 6 / ISBN-10: 0761861548.**

When we talk about public service interpreting in the comfortable and reassuring environment of academia, we often tend to forget that we are referring to a professional field existence is ignored by the majority of people who are outside the profession. We also tend to overlook the fact that, although the need for training in PSIT is widely acknowledged, the question of *how* to train future public service interpreters and translators remains. In the last few decades, the copious amount of literature on public service interpreting (Hale 2007; Corsellis 2008) has contributed to shedding some light on a flurry of topics, which go from the interpreter's role(s) to conversational analysis, from professionalisation to the development of codes of ethics. However, we still find a paucity of references for those people who are interested or already work in PSIT but do not (yet) possess any formal specialisation or training. The book by Professor Valero-Garcés aims to fill this gap: as the author herself suggests, this is not meant to be a theoretical or regulatory book for experts in the field, but rather a manual for people who already serve as liaisons between authorities and immigrant communities, those who really need to be trained.

Valero's book is divided into five chapters, each of which has a clear and tripartite structure consisting of theoretical insights into PSIT, practical exercises and abundant lists of bibliographic references.

Chapter one (*Interlinguistic Communication: Introduction to Interpreting and Translation*) sets a clear definition of 'public service interpreting' and illustrates its basic concepts, with a special focus on the distinction between bilinguals and interpreters, which is grievously ignored by non-experts in the field. The current situation of the translation and interpreting market is also extensively explained, although sometimes too much attention is paid to the Spanish context. The activity section contains a vast array of resources concerning PSIT (dictionaries, websites, blogs, professional associations, and training courses at European level) which can be retrieved on-line.

Chapter two (*Public Service Interpreting and Translation: the Current State of the Situation*) provides a more detailed description of the scope of PSIT with a general overview on the evolution and the current state of its professional recognition in several Western countries. The case study on the current situation in Spain (which reports the results of a questionnaire carried out at national level) also contributes to gaining a wider understanding of the institutional and academic mechanisms needed to meet the growing demand of qualified interpreters in this field. The exercise

section aims at raising awareness on the work carried out by NGOs, as readers are invited, among other things, to discover how these organisations work and whether their volunteers are trained or not.

Chapter three (*Fundamentals of Public Service Interpreting and Translation*) offers an exhaustive overview on a wide range of specific features of PSIT, such as: the interpreter's role, the influence of culture in mediation, the long-standing debate on the differences between interpreters and cultural mediators and codes of professional ethics. In this regard, an interesting section of this chapter is devoted to ad-hoc practical activities with different interpreting scenarios, which allow readers to assimilate and implement the principles of codes of conduct.

Chapter four (*Introduction to Public Service Interpreting. Training and Practice*) underlines the differences between conference interpreting and PSIT and indicates the specific skills an interpreter must possess to work in either (or both) fields. Paragraph four of this chapter is entirely devoted (and rightly so) to one of the most debated issues in PSIT of all time: the emotional impact experienced by interpreters who work in these settings. In this section, a review of four studies concerning the emotional and psychological factors in PSIT is presented, and enables the reader to identify and broadly discuss the three main sources of stress interpreters have to face, which are of a personal, situational and contextual nature. Although data collected through empirical studies conducted at European level (Baistow 1999) show that only 10% of interpreters have received training in stress management, the activities available at the end of the chapter are a good and basic practice method which may prove beneficial for aspiring public service interpreters.

Chapter five (*Introduction to Public Service Translation. Training, Resources, Tools and Practice*) analyses exclusively the field of public service translation. After an overview of the basic concepts and tools belonging to the realm of translation (competence, skills, working languages, CAT tools, etc.), the author focuses on the three most commonly translated types of texts in PSIT: official documents, service guides and informative pamphlets. The exercise section allows the reader to analyse critically examples of written translation, which may be more or less appropriate depending on the context: in some of the activities proposed, for instance, readers are asked to translate the same text for patients with high or little education, an exercise which contributes to enhancing the problem-solving skills of the future translators.

Chapter six (*General Bibliography for Public Service Interpreting and Translation*) offers a comprehensive list of references to those who wish to deepen their knowledge of PSIT.

Overall, the book by Valero-Garcés, which is meant to serve as a practical guidebook for laypeople or future professionals in the field of PSIT, may

also be a good companion for trainers and PhD students in their first year, due to the rich bibliography provided. The book is generally well written, and the main features of PSIT are elucidated clearly, a characteristic which demonstrates her deep knowledge and wide experience of teaching and practicing PSIT. By taking readers by the hand, Valero's book allows them to discover the fascinating but at the same time complex world of PSIT. Furthermore, the noble purpose of reaching out to those people who are not (or cannot be) trained in universities is the added value of this contribution, whose mission of spreading knowledge of PSIT to laypeople can be said to be successfully accomplished.

## **References**

- **Hale, Sandra Beatriz** (2007). *Community Interpreting*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- **Corsellis, Ann** (2008). *Public Service Interpreting. The First Steps*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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