

Book Review: *Translation and Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19*, edited by Kanglong Liu and Andrew K. F. Cheung, Singapore, Springer, 2022, 347pp., EUR 119.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-981-19-6679-8.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a profound global social impact, its carry-over effects configuring what is a post-pandemic era. Various aspects of society have been reframed by this unprecedented crisis, including industrial development, education, media, and ways of conducting cultural exchange and communication. Playing a key role in facilitating cross-cultural interaction and global communication, translation and interpreting activities have undergone a vast change and are highly worth investigating. Against this backdrop, the edited volume *Translation and Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19* serves as a pioneering work in illuminating the challenges and the opportunities that the pandemic brought to translation and interpreting (T&I) as an industrial practice and as an area of research and teaching. This work examines the pandemic's multifaceted impact on T&I activities from three perspectives: one, reconceptualising translation, two, interpreting, and three, T&I teaching. Each scholar in this volume has explored diverse topics relating to these three perspectives, revealing as they do so, how the pandemic has transformed T&I practices, pedagogy, and research.

The volume sets off with Chapter 1, an introduction chapter by editors **Kanglong Liu** and **Andrew K. F. Cheung**. In this chapter, they provide a detailed overview of how COVID-19 is reshaping the T&I landscape. They acknowledge the difficulties and disruptions caused by the pandemic as well as the opportunities it has created, particularly in expediting technology integration into T&I activities. They provide a preview of the contributions which offer insights into T&I during the pandemic in diverse contexts.

In the first section, “Reconceptualising Translation in the Age of COVID-19”, **Yufeng Liu and Dechao Li** in Chapter 2 reveal substantial differences between two news outlets, one from China and one in the UK, in their use of conceptual metaphors, framing strategies and attitudinal graduation, which are especially prominent in the narratives concerning the COVID control measures implemented by China and US. The findings reveal the deep-seated ideologies and cultural narratives that can be observed in the translation process. This chapter thus illuminates how language reflects and influences public perception during a global crisis. Through meticulous analysis of both the top-down (government-led) and bottom-up (individual and small business) translation materials, **Chonglong Gu**’s study in Chapter 3 then underlines the significance of providing accurate and accessible multilingual resources by translation and multilingual text production for ethnically and culturally diverse multilingual communities at times of public health crises. This work reflects a broader understanding of translation not just as a linguistic exercise but as a crucial public service that can save lives in a pandemic context. In Chapter 4, **Yu Kit Cheung**’s analysis of the UK Government’s Chinese translations reveals significant deviations from standard Chinese usage, hampering effective communication. As they explain, until early 2022, translations were primarily available in simplified Chinese, overlooking traditional Chinese versions. This limitation particularly affected the notable Cantonese-speaking community, restricting their access to crucial pandemic information. These findings are a reminder of the complexities in translation work, particularly in a multicultural and multilingual context. The focus of Chapter 5 is technological advancements in which **Sai Cheong Siu** investigates the performance of COVID-19 MT Evaluator, a platform that can assess machine-translated epidemic-related information. By enabling quick assessments of machine translation (MT) performance, the author argues that the platform facilitates the rapid dissemination of reliable, translated health information. This research sheds light on the potential for MT to augment human efforts in critical times and the importance of embracing technology in emergency response scenarios.

In the second section, “Reconceptualising Interpreting in the Age of COVID-19”,

Andrew K. F. Cheung presents, in Chapter 6, a meticulous study on remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) between English and Chinese, comparing the quality of interpretation by professionals (from mainland China) working from a hub versus those working from home. The study shows that hub-based interpreters perform better and experience less cognitive strain, particularly with numbers, due to superior equipment and strategies. It shows that the broader adaptation to remote work imposes significant ergonomic and cognitive demands on the interpreting profession. The section continues with Chapter 7, in which **Marta Buján and Camille Collard** present a survey of responses of 849 interpreters from 19 countries regarding their perceptions and coping mechanisms related to Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) during COVID-19. Generally acknowledging RSI's challenges, interpreters adapted to RSI through practices like shorter work periods and improved handovers. Private sector interpreters showed greater acceptance of RSI than institutional interpreters. The study recognizes RSI's rise as part of a larger technological integration trend in response to global disruptions. In Chapter 8, **Marie Diur and Lucía Ruiz Rosendo** examine the significant impact of COVID-19 on the working and testing procedures of conference interpreting at the United Nations. They demonstrate, using archival analysis and personal experience, how the pandemic hastened the shift to remote interpreting and necessitated the implementation of online testing for hiring new interpreters. Their analysis offers a detailed perspective on the evolving challenges and adjustments faced by interpreters and trainers within international organizations during the pandemic. **Lucía Ruiz Rosendo and Maura Radicioni's** paper on humanitarian interpreting in Chapter brings a different angle. The authors provide foundational information on the concept of humanitarian interpreting, positioning it within the larger context of crisis translation. By examining the pandemic's impact on humanitarian aid delivery and homing in on the specific realm of humanitarian interpreting, they explore the multifaceted challenges faced by humanitarian organizations and their interpreters, who are tasked with navigating complex multilingual and multicultural communication demands in the pandemic's wake. In Chapter 10, **Márta Seresi and Petra Lea Lánco**s draw on semi-structured interviews to explore how

interpreters interact and collaborate via RSI platforms. Their research reveals that many interpreters avoid collaboration due to difficult handovers and limited ability to support active colleagues, though some have developed workaround strategies. The study highlights how RSI complicates the collaborative nature of conference interpreting, affecting performance and job satisfaction. In Chapter 11, **Deborah Giustini** uses a sociological lens rooted in practice theory to analyse how technological integration has transformed remote interpreting during COVID-19. Drawing on industry reports and surveys, the study highlights issues like interpreter de-skilling, reduced visibility, shifting stakeholder dynamics, and the dual effects of technology on teamwork—both uniting and fragmenting coordination. The research underscores new challenges in the field and calls for a re-evaluation of how technology mediates and shapes communication in professional interpreting.

In the third section, “Translation and Interpreting Teaching in the Age of COVID-19”, **Kanglong Liu, Ho Ling Kwok, and Wenjing Li** in Chapter 12 examine student perspectives on hybrid teaching for translation instruction, blending face-to-face and online participation during COVID-19. Surveys and interviews reveal that despite some technical challenges, students found more benefits than drawbacks in this flexible mode. The study highlights the need for adaptable teaching approaches during the pandemic and reassures that students appreciate the value of hybrid learning. For Chapter 13, **Nancy Tsai and Damien Fan** emphasize the cultural specificity of online teaching’s educational benefits, framed by the 4Cs—immediacy, privacy, intimacy, and democracy. They argue that online education departs from traditional, Confucian-influenced Chinese classrooms, fostering a more engaging and egalitarian environment. Highlighting the importance of “social presence”, their study underscores a shift toward inclusive, multimodal learning and contributes to the broader discourse on innovative pedagogical methods. Chapter 14 reveals how **Soňa Hodáková and Emília Perez** analyse the shift to remote T&I education at Slovak universities during COVID-19, examining students’ and teachers’ perspectives. Their study uses mixed methods at two points in time to provide a longitudinal view of evolving challenges and solutions. This approach sheds light on

immediate crisis responses and the adaptation trajectory, offering valuable insights to inform long-term educational strategies. Similarly, through focus groups, **David B. Sawyer** in Chapter 15 examines students' and instructors' attitudes toward traditional and online teaching at a university in the US. The study reveals that both groups have developed a more favourable view of online teaching and support maintaining an online component post-pandemic. Despite challenges, they value the increased flexibility and convenience, reflecting a shift in pedagogical priorities toward adaptability and enhanced learner convenience in the curriculum. In Chapter 16, **Chen-En Ho and Yuan Zou** investigate the effectiveness of the proximity-based platform Gather in overcoming obstacles in remote interpreter education by comparing students' perceptions on Gather, Microsoft Teams, and traditional face-to-face instruction. Findings indicate that most participants favour Gather, which effectively narrows the gap between remote and in-person learning. This study addresses the pressing need for robust virtual learning environments in interpreter training and thus suggests that platforms simulating physical presence can significantly enhance the online educational experience. For Chapter 17, the final chapter in this volume, **Nan Zhao** examines the role of computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) technology during COVID-19, categorizing it into remote interpreting, training tools, pre-task, and in-task tools, with a focus on automatic speech recognition. The paper reviews two decades of CAI development, recent advancements, and real-world applications. Highlighting the impact of AI and machine learning, Zhao demonstrates how CAI supports interpreters from preparation to execution, emphasizing its significance in interpreting, particularly during global crises.

By tackling a wide range of pressing issues, the edited volume makes a timely and significant contribution to T&I studies. Notably, the work highlights the critical role of T&I in crisis communication and risk reduction ensuring that language does not hinder the delivery of accurate information across diverse communities—a cornerstone of social equity (Federici & O'Brien, 2020). This perspective underscores the indispensable function of T&I in mitigating linguistic barriers during global crises. The volume also explores media translation's ideological nuances, pandemic-induced changes in

practitioners' working conditions and social standing, and transformations in T&I education. Specifically, it recontextualizes established research areas within the global crisis, ranging from how translators and journalists shape event representation (e.g., Valdeón, 2020) to the sociological, cognitive, ergonomic, and pedagogical implications of accelerated T&I automation (e.g., Vieira, 2018). The discussions in this volume reveal rich interdisciplinary connections of T&I with broader fields during a global crisis (e.g., O'Brien, 2013). Moving beyond mere description, the volume's meticulous analysis probes these intersecting challenges of crisis communication, technological adaptation, and pedagogical transformation, offering valuable insights and potential solutions.

Moreover, technological advancements are fundamentally reshaping translators' cognitive activity, social relations, and professional standing (Pym, 2011). The volume captures how the pandemic has catalysed technology integration in T&I practices. Through comprehensive platform evaluations and authentic user experiences, the technological discourse provides valuable insights for practitioners and researchers navigating the evolving landscape of T&I.

Methodologically, the volume showcases a rich diversity of research approaches, ranging from quantitative analysis and qualitative assessments to conceptual analyses. This methodological variety not only broadens the volume's scope but also reinforces the reliability of its findings and recommendations. In addition, the volume's insights gain broader applicability through the diversity of the global contexts it examines, including specific case studies from countries like the UK, the US, Slovakia, China, and others, as well as the role of international organizations like the United Nations. This wide-ranging perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's impact on T&I practices in different cultural and linguistic settings.

The volume adeptly documents the T&I community's resilience and adaptability during a pivotal historical juncture. Nonetheless, it is evident that certain topics are worth more in-depth exploration. For instance, the long-term viability and efficiency of remote interpreting and online T&I training merit continued inquiry into their sustainability. Future research could also explore best practices for technological integration, assess its

efficacy across different educational and professional contexts, compare long-term learning outcomes with traditional methods, and conduct thorough and rigorous testing on these technologies to gauge their impact on T&I quality and efficiency. Moreover, the volume sparks a keen interest in researching T&I in crisis settings and among marginalised groups, suggesting a ripe area for academic inquiry and practical innovation. All these aspects provide imperative implications for the future trajectory of the field.

Overall, drawing on its comprehensive scope and incisive analysis, the compilation successfully captures the multifaceted challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. More importantly, it illuminates the trajectory of T&I in the post-pandemic era, which makes it an invaluable guidepost for navigating future challenges. Its in-depth analysis, practical relevance, and forward-thinking approach establish it as a cornerstone resource for anyone engaged with the T&I field, from the classroom to the field, during the COVID-19 era and beyond.

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