

**Pöchhacker, Franz. *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004. xii + pp. 252. £ 50.**

This single-volume survey from a well-known interpreting researcher is to be welcomed if only on the grounds that such a book is long overdue. It is a praiseworthy attempt at creating some kind of order out of the widely (and sometimes wildly) disparate body of studies that has to date been described under the catch-all term of 'Interpreting Studies'. The author himself says it is intended as 'map of interpreting studies as field of research'. It is both ambitious and all-embracing in its remit, and should be hailed as a courageous effort at doing something often contemplated but never seriously attempted. It could be usefully read in conjunction with a previous book (co-authored with Miriam Shlesinger) entitled *The Interpreting Studies Reader* (2002) by the same publisher. The current study provides a synchronic addition to the diachronic approach of the earlier book.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 (Foundations), comprises five chapters (Concepts, Evolution, Approaches, Paradigms, Models), providing what the author calls the "synthetic" representation or 'road-map' of the discipline. The chapters describe the complexity of the object of study, the historical evolution of interpreting studies as a discipline, the major disciplinary, theoretic and methodological approaches, paradigms and research traditions and ends with considerations of current models of the interpreting process. This part is probably the most solid section of the book, coming as it does on the back of the 2002 publication. Part 2 (Selected topics and research) provides an 'analytical' presentation of the 'state of the art' in terms of discussion of process, product and performance, practice, profession and pedagogy. Described here are the 'landmarks of empirical research', the section being firmly ensconced in the current trend towards empirical research. Part 3 (Directions) provides pointer towards future trends in the microcosm of interpreting studies, and surprisingly, in view of the youth of the discipline itself, is the 'leanest' section, providing general pointers which in certain cases are common to all fields of research.

The book is well-organised, with an excellent in-text cross-reference system. It is also very user-friendly in providing chapter summaries and sources for further reading; on the downside, the 'suggestions for further study' are not always felicitous or even useful (see, for example, page 26). In spite of its claims to being 'synthetic' and 'analytical', there is a tendency for the book (especially in Section 2) to slew towards the encyclopaedic; the author is aware of this shortcoming in apologising for any author who may have been 'given short shrift', he does not mention the corollary – that some authors and models are over-exposed here. But of course this may well reflect the nature of the discipline itself, where there still seems to be greater concern about generating ideas than providing objective critical appraisal of what is currently 'on the table'.

Pöchhacker is right to insist on “unity in diversity” and the essentially unitarian nature of interpreting studies, in spite of its ‘overwhelming degree of diversity and difference’, by emphasising the ‘linkages, relations and common ground in various dimensions’.

Any shortcomings are probably the inevitable consequences of both the book’s ambitious remit and the fact that a single-author work cannot but express a single point of view. This notwithstanding, this book is a very welcome, ground-breaking addition to the growing body of studies on interpreting in all its manifestations.

Hopefully this extremely useful one-volume survey will encourage future partial purviews of different areas of this emerging discipline.

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