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Until the 1990s, public service translation and interpreting (PSTI) was a rather neglected area within the field of Interpreting Studies. However, since the turn of the century it has received unprecedented attention from the research community. In 2006, *Linguistica Antverpiensia* published a powerful and stimulating special issue focused on taking stock of the short history of PSTI research. In the introduction, the editors—Erik Hertog and Bart van de Veer—pointed out that “community interpreting” could now be identified as the most active field of research within the discipline of Interpreting Studies, but also that there was still an unfulfilled need to “focus on immediate practical challenges such as training or professional policies and practices because they form the cornerstones of the professionalization of the work of the community interpreters.” (Hertog & Van der Veer 2006: 12). The present volume, edited by Raquel de Pedro Ricoy, Isabelle Perez and Christine Wilson, comes to fill the gaps alluded to by Hertog & Van der Veer, with a collection of empirical works and scholarly analyses representative of some of the main lines and methods of research in PSTI.

This book was inspired by the international conference on Public Service Interpreting and Translating held at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh in 2005, although it is not a book of proceedings, and authors other than the original speakers were invited to complete the collection. The result is a comprehensive monograph containing ten essays by academics, practitioners and service providers from different countries, who discuss some of the main issues in the field of PSTI. These essays can be grouped in three thematic sections, loosely coinciding with the title of this monograph: policy, practice and pedagogy¹.

The first two essays are directly related to **policy**. First is a contribution by **Isabelle Perez & Christine Wilson** in which the authors present a summary of a research project carried out by a Heriot-Watt University team from the Centre for Translation and Interpreting Studies in Scotland (CTISS). The project was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to study the provision of translation, interpreting and communication support (TICS) within the public services in Scotland. It was conducted in 2004 and collected both quantitative and qualitative data by means of interviews with TICS providers and public sector bodies. This ambitious study produced objective data to substantiate impressions and anecdotal evidence on the state of TICS in the country. Based on the needs and challenges of current TICS services—as well as on the strengths and examples of good practice—identified by participants in the study, the

authors propose a *TICS Model for Scotland*. This Model consists of a comprehensive, interrelated network of five units that would cover independent areas of TICS (training and education; research; professional issues; quality control, standards and accreditation; needs observation and analysis) while networking and providing feedback to each other through a centralised *Scottish TICS*. The authors thus offer a comprehensive, evidence-based, and realistic model to be presented to policy-makers, and with a potential for replication in other areas outside Scotland.

Bernardette O'Rourke & Pedro Castillo explore the extent to which language policies in Scotland, Ireland and Spain include provisions for public sector interpreting (PSI), and offer a critical analysis of the ideologies that seem to inspire the current situation in this regard. The three countries under study have relatively long-established policies to support and promote their autochthonous languages, but—Spain and Ireland in particular—are still lacking in provisions to cater for the communication needs of newcomers. With a very analytical structure, this essay provides a thorough and relevant background to the central theme. It includes interesting definitions of language policy concepts, an insightful description of different perspectives in addressing communication barriers ("service provision model" versus "social inclusion model") (page number?), and a perceptive analysis of how language policies and their inclusion of PSI provisions (or lack thereof) reflect ideologies. One example of this is the expectation that newcomers will eventually learn the languages of the host societies unless they are unwilling to do so. The authors highlight the many similarities between Ireland and Spain, more prone to *ad-hoc* solutions in general, in contrast with Scotland and its somewhat more developed, top-down PSI policies. However, if Scotland has evolved from *ad-hoc*, bottom-up solutions to top-down policies, we might hope for similar progress in Spain and Ireland. As a general comment on this essay, it is worth noting that even though descriptive studies of PSI in different national contexts have inspired a wealth of publications in the first stages of research in PSI (Martin 2003: 435), a comparative review of national language policies and their regard for PSI provision is an original approach that could even provide useful information to lobby authorities into recognising PSI services as part of the language rights of all citizens.

The largest part of this volume is devoted to the **practice** of translation and interpreting, with a clear bias towards interpreting—in fact, only one article deals with translation. Most of the works included here either directly or indirectly address the issue of interpreter role, offering perceptive and thought-provoking reflections from different settings and perspectives.

In his contribution **Ian Mason**, as always, is clear, accessible and lucid. His paper explores the issue of role, providing inspiring insights into this central issue of public service interpreting research. Mason's works on dialogue interpreting conceptualised as face-to-face interaction (1999, 2000, 2001) rank among the classics, and are quoted together with seminal studies on the microdynamics of interpreting by Berk-Seligson (1990), Wadensjö (1992, 1998), Roy (1996, 2000), or Hale (1997, 2001, 2004)—all key works that have consolidated the foundations of the dialogic discourse-based interaction or *DI Paradigm* distinctive of PSI research (Pöchhacker 2004: 79). In his contribution to this volume, Mason elaborates further on the notion of interpreting as interaction, and advocates an approach that departs from a static notion of *role* to adopt the dynamic concept of *positioning*. Prescriptive views of role, and rules enshrined in codes of conduct give the impression that role is a predetermined, fixed stance, but observation of reality shows that even interpreters that admittedly abide by these codes, often depart from pre-established norms in their daily practice. This observation by Mason has been widely acknowledged by other researchers (Wadensjö 1992, 1998; Martin & Valero 2008: 5), and is in fact also mentioned in two other papers in this volume (*cf.* Bot and Martin & Ortega). Essentially, we are far from completely understanding what the actual role and limits of interpreters are, and more research is needed to observe the behaviour of all participants in real-life interpreted situations in order to better understand the nature of interpreted events. This is the rationale behind Mason's paper, a descriptive study of authentic interpreted dialogues from an interesting range of sources (a television documentary on illegal immigration and interviews studied elsewhere by himself and by other authors). The analysis of these interpreted events shows the ways—both linguistic and paralinguistic—in which all the participants in the interaction position and re-position themselves throughout a single event, affecting each others' positions. The analysis is based on six parameters: orientation or positioning of each participant with respect to each other; attempts to control responses (e.g. through choices in the translation strategies for questions); use and translation of contextualisation cues; in-group solidarity, or how expressions of power, deference or distance are used and translated; gaze as a paralinguistic feature which determines positioning and recognition of participants as interlocutors or rather as onlookers; and selection of which discourse and lexical items to relay. The behaviour of all participants is thus proved to be interrelated, and their positions are shown to develop relative to each other's and are subject to joint negotiation. Finally, Mason suggests lines for further research based on large-scale studies that will explore how positioning-related choices impact on the outcome of the interpreted event.

Raffaella Merlini reports on the results of an empirical study of interactional asymmetry in medical encounters, based on data selected from nine tape-recorded interviews in an emergency service specifically

established in an Italian hospital during the summer season for English-speaking tourists. The interpreting is provided by “administrative assistant-interpreters” (pn) with no specific qualification in translation or interpreting. The study has the merit of using real-life material and provides a very informative and detailed theoretical background and analytical approach. Power differentials have been amply established in the literature as a distinctive characteristic of public service interpreting, but Merlini provides an original, well-rounded and clearly defined discussion of power imbalance as a function of interactional asymmetry, which in turn is determined by a complex set of factors. A study of interactional behaviour in terms of turn-taking and topic development reveals how medical encounters respond to an asymmetrical communication pattern where doctors interact from a dominant position, taking or giving the floor and establishing the agenda of the meeting. Different theoretical approaches are explored which describe interactional control as depending either on the doctor’s willingness to yield his/her dominance, or else on the phase of a typically sequential interaction (history taking, discussion of treatment, etc.). The author argues that the patient’s assertiveness and consequent readiness to claim conversational control should also be considered as a variable in the dominance equation—one that would be determined by the culture-specific discourse style and interactional models of the patient. Furthermore, in multilingual encounters, the interpreter’s reproduction of such interactional behaviours can be expected to influence the course of the encounter. These theoretical foundations provide the analytical tools to explore five passages (selected from the larger original corpus of recorded interviews), where different instances are identified in which the doctor, the patient or the interpreter take the lead. Merlini concludes that the degree of interactional asymmetry changes throughout a single encounter as a result of a complex interplay of factors, including culture-specific discourse patterns, interlocutors’ adherence to well established and internalised rules of institutional communication, and the interpreter’s personal assessment of how the interaction should be organised. The corpus used in this article is not too extensive, but the analysis is perfectly well-founded and conclusions are proportional to the size and scope of the study. However one may wonder whether some of the results may be more related to untrained interpreters’ lack of competence than to their conscious decisions as social actors. The author herself suggests this at some point, but replication and confirmation of conclusions with a larger set of data would be interesting.

The section on interpreting practice continues with an essay by **Hanneke Bot**, who provides a series of reflections on three different role models as found during her PhD research on mental health interpreting in the Netherlands. In line with observations by other researchers, as mentioned above, Bot offers intriguing insights into the difference between the admitted normative roles of interpreters and interlocutors, and the reality

of their practical behaviour. In the course of her PhD research, and after interviewing interpreters, providers and users of interpreting services, the author identified two “ideal” or normative interpreter roles—the machine model (typical of adversarial situations, such as court or police settings) and the interaction model (preferred for healthcare). Subsequently, she analysed interpreted psychotherapy sessions with asylum seekers, exploring how the different admitted roles materialised in actual behaviour. At this point, it is worth noting that Bot offers an original discussion of role from the perspective of service providers, not only because she herself is a psychotherapist, but because the therapists participating in her study were asked to state which model of interpreting they adhered to when working through interpreters, and their behaviours are described as a function of each of the models. Bot’s analysis of recorded interviews revealed a third role that the participants had not identified but had used in practice—the “interpreter as participant” (pn) model, where the interpreter intervenes as an individual person. Furthermore, observation of actual behaviour proves that the three roles form a continuum, and that interlocutors and interpreters shift along this continuum during an encounter. As other researchers have described, there is no clear border between different roles in practice, it is rather a question of degree (Martin & Valero 2008: 2). The author makes an even more interesting observation after investigating how interlocutors interact: divergent (non-equivalent) renditions occurred with the same frequency in all interviews, regardless of the interpreting model adhered to by participants. The difference was found in *how* interlocutors reacted to divergent renditions (when they were able to identify or suspected them), either applying repair strategies (in the interaction model group) or not (in the machine model group). Given the importance of repair strategies to anticipate and compensate for potential misunderstandings (and based on other logical, practical and theoretical considerations), Bot concludes taking a clear stand in favour of the interactive model of interpreting as the most adequate approach for interpreter-mediated events.

Anne Martin & Juan Miguel Ortega explore the issue of role as perceived by practising court interpreters in the Spanish context. Although this essay is set in a particular public service and country, it presents an empirical study which substantiates considerations on role on a larger scale—the contradiction between normative roles and actual behaviour of interpreters in daily practice, the question of whether this contradiction responds to intuitive or else to reflective decisions taken by interpreters, and the motives behind such decisions. This paper presents a questionnaire-based study involving nineteen practising court interpreters in the Madrid region. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of interpreters regarding their role, and to identify the strategies they use to fulfil what they consider to be their functions. Martin & Ortega provide a detailed description of the methodology used in their research, and present a thorough theoretical discussion of the issue of role, providing a

very relevant backdrop to their study. Two different notions of role and their rationale are reviewed—the supposedly ideal concept of court interpreters who translate verbatim and strictly respect the “legal equivalent” model, versus the notion of interpreters who feel responsible for the success of communication and are prepared to go beyond what would usually be considered the limits of their role. Considering that Spain is a country with no specific rules of conduct it would seem particularly relevant to explore how Spanish court interpreters conduct themselves vis-à-vis these two schools of thought. Participants in the study were questioned about the discursual techniques they used in daily practice (whether they adapt register, explain cultural differences and legal procedures, and edit information); about how they used these practices (whether and when they informed primary interlocutors about them); and about what they considered their functions to be. Open questions were included in the questionnaire to allow comments on why they took different decisions regarding their duties. The analysis of results revealed that court interpreters seem to take on a more active role than would initially be attributed to or expected of them, and that very often they do so consciously, guided by their conviction that their role is to facilitate communication. In the light of these results, and in an interesting final conclusion, the authors reflect on the need to draft guidelines for Spanish court interpreters that will address the specific features of the Spanish legal system, rather than considering standards based on adversarial court systems that tend to officially favour the “legal equivalent” model of interpreting.

Maria Tillman’s essay is a small-scale study on pragmatics within the context of asylum hearings, a type of encounter which has received less attention from interactional studies as compared to other public service settings. Furthermore, numerous studies on pragmatics have dealt with the Spanish-English language pair (notably Berk-Seligson 1988, 1990, and Hale 1997, 2001, 2004). In this regard, research involving other languages—German in combination with English in this case—with differing cultural speech styles can provide valuable results regarding the interpretation of pragmatic meaning and its impact on the outcome of interpreted events. This is the general context of Tillman’s study, which investigates how a German/English interpreter deals with the pragmatic meaning expressed by modal particles in German—a type of discourse marker with no perfect equivalent in English. This piece of research is based on five passages of a recorded asylum interview carried out by the German immigration authorities and broadcast as part of a television documentary. Tillman starts by describing previous research in this area, and goes on to offer an informative account of the nature of asylum hearings as an adversarial and hierarchical type of interaction, highly ritualised and based on a mostly fixed interrogatory structure. In this context, the deliberate use of modal particles by the German speaking immigration officer while questioning the applicant is a key factor that

determines the tenor, solidarity and distance between primary interlocutors, the perceptions that interlocutors have of each other, and thus the overall outcome of the interview. Although based on a limited set of data, Tillman offers an insightful analysis of results: the interpreter is found to react in two ways to modal particles, namely omitting their illocutionary effect and sticking to purely factual information, or else—less often—substituting these discourse markers with expressions that approximate their pragmatic significance. As for the discussion of results—in particular when it comes to exploring the reasons behind the interpreter's way of dealing with pragmatic significance—Tillman can only speculate or draw on larger similar studies by other authors, given the small-scale of her own corpus and the lack of information on contextual factors (e.g. the profile of the interpreter, and the final outcome of the asylum hearing are unknown). In relation to this, the author completes her paper with two relevant sections specifying the limitations of her own study, and producing valuable suggestions as to methodological approaches that would complement her results and shed light on how interpreters deal with the transfer of pragmatic meaning, the impact of their behaviour on the perceptions of interlocutors, and the consequences of interpreters' choices on the general outcome of the interaction. In essence, Tillman's contribution offers a valuable approach *per se*, but is also to be viewed as an inspiring point of departure for further research.

The last paper devoted to the practice of interpreting—and the only one on sign language interpreting—is authored by **Jules Dickinson & Graham Turner**, and provides an unusual and thought-provoking approach to the issue of role. The authors posit that the construction of meaning is a collaborative task, and therefore all participants in an interpreted interaction should share responsibility for the success of communication. Furthermore, Dickinson & Graham's discussion of role focuses not so much on whether invisibility is a desirable or in fact a realistic option, but rather on how making the interpreter *explicitly* visible to clients would improve the whole communication process. Dickinson & Turner's contribution is based on a study of sign language interpreting in the workplace which used an ethnographic approach to data collection and qualitative analysis of videotaped data and questionnaires distributed to interpreters. As an interesting and infrequently used source of secondary data, participants in the study were asked to keep a journal for three months, where they recorded their experiences and impressions of their workplace experiences. For the purpose of the paper included in the present volume, the authors selected one of the many issues of concern alluded to by the interpreters, namely interpreter's visibility. As contextual background to the study, we find a detailed and perceptive description of the emotional and practical issues that Deaf persons and their interpreters come up against in the workplace. In this context, sign language interpreters very often behave along the lines of the supposedly ideal 'invisible interpreter' model, compelled by their desire to make the Deaf

person more visible. The implications of this choice of role on the perceptions of hearing persons about Deaf people and about the interpreters are wide and sometimes unexpected. Among other things, hearing people may make judgemental assessments of interpreters, seeing them as self-sufficient individuals, reluctant to interact socially with the hearing employees, or as translating machines with no personal or social needs. Dysfunctions in communication and threats to the well-being of the Deaf person may develop, and chances for interpreting to be seen as a useful asset instead of a nuisance are missed. This is where Dickinson & Turner's proposal to make the interpreter visible and engage the primary participants comes in. The authors argue that interpreters must start by accepting their role as visible, active individuals and participants in the interaction; they must find effective ways to explain to both the Deaf and the hearing clients what is involved in the interpreting process, and in communicating across linguistic and cultural barriers in the workplace. The former needs to be well informed about what is involved in a predominantly hearing workplace culture, and the latter needs explanation about what adaptations are needed in the normal running of the workplace in order to make Deaf employees an integral part of the organisation. Finally, Dickinson & Turner reflect on the fact that this endeavour can only succeed if alliances are forged one step at a time, starting with individual interpreters who, through the actions mentioned above, engage their clients in a collaborative effort to make communication a success.

Lyse Hébert contributes the only essay on translation practice, an empirical and reflective study based on sociological perspectives favoured by the critical discourse analysis approach. This paper is original in its theme, and somewhat surprising in its results, thus providing stimulating reading in a field where comparatively little research has been published. Hébert presents the results of a study aimed at exploring the reactions of a group of Francophone nurses in the English-speaking province of Ontario, when faced with the feminisation of translated texts provided by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). The study is contextualised in the regulatory framework of this Canadian province, which demands that all public sector documents be written in a non-sexist style. However, as a result of the personal choice of the team of translators (who argued that the majority of nurses in Ontario are women), and after consultation with the CNO, the documents addressed to Francophone nurses were translated using the generic feminine form, i.e., were 'feminised,' instead of using non-sexist grammatical forms (epicenes, masculine/feminine doublets). Hébert explains such choice in the context of a school of feminist scholars and translators who foreground the feminine gender in their writings and do so as part of a social process of affirmation. Against this philosophical backdrop, the translators in Hébert's team decided to intervene as social agents counteracting the neutralising effect on the official non-sexist style. Reflecting on the ethical dilemmas and

controversies involved in this option, the author embarked upon an exploratory study of how the target readers, i.e. the nurses, would perceive feminised texts, conjecturing that they would welcome feminisation as affirmation of both their gender and their predominantly female profession. A small group of nurses (twelve women and a man) offered their views, the majority of them affirming nursing as a female profession, but also rejecting or reacting in ambivalent ways to feminisation. They argued that it perpetuated the image of nursing as a gendered profession, which, precisely because it is predominantly female, ranks lower in the health system and society. Hence they considered that representing nursing as a desexualised profession would be more beneficial to their social, political and economic advancement. Hébert provides a deep and detailed analysis of the different factors that appeared to inform these opinions, and concludes that gender cannot be separated from social, political and economic considerations.

Finally a disproportionately short section on **pedagogy** features a very pragmatic essay by **Hanne Skaaden & Maria Wattne** on training interpreters online. This contribution should appeal in particular to trainers and administrators looking for ways to improve access to training for *de facto* interpreters with no means or motivation to attend traditional training courses, but also to educators who find themselves wondering if interpreting skills lend themselves to distance education. The authors briefly explore the need for training interpreters in general and in the Norwegian context in particular, and describe how on-campus training initiatives have not been too successful in the past, despite the admitted need to improve the qualification level of current practitioners in the country. The course described by Skaaden & Wattne was implemented in 2004, trained 116 students (most of them immigrants) during 32 weeks, and covered 13 languages in combination with Norwegian. The initial screening tests guaranteed a uniform and relatively high level of proficiency on the part of all participants, and the choice of simple and flexible technology, together with several weekends of on-campus sessions, assured full access to training materials and learning activities. In broad terms, the course covered areas such as ethics and professional issues, linguistic aspects of interpreted communication, and contextual (institutional) knowledge. The pedagogical approach was student-centred and based on reflective and experiential learning, and was strongly supported by an internet platform that allowed for both asynchronous (forum) and synchronous (chat) communication. Furthermore, the development of two different “cyber-rooms,” language independent and language related respectively, addressed the linguistic challenges of training a diverse multilingual group of trainees in a single course. Finally, the course achieved an 81 per cent completion rate, which is a high result for an online course, and bears witness to the success of this initiative as an alternative and more cost-effective training solution.

To conclude, the selection of papers that make up this volume provides a comprehensive view of the field of translation and interpreting in the public sector, on the basis of the three areas which provide the foundations for any professional activity: policy, practice and pedagogy. The width and depth of the collection as a whole make it an essential work of reference.

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¹ The articles will be reviewed in that order, following the title of the monograph, although that is not how they are presented in the book.