

BOOK REVIEW

CARDINAL ASPECTS OF TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING HEALTH MATTERS

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The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health, Şebnem Susam-Saraeva and Eva Spišiaková (eds.), Routledge, 2021, 428 pp, £152,00 (Hardback) ISBN 9781138335349 £31.99 (e-book) ISBN 9781003167983

The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Health, edited by Şebnem Susam-Saraeva and Eva Spišiaková, has been available to the public for a year but remains as relevant and current as the first day it was published. The pertinence of the twenty-three essays in this long-needed *vade mecum* is justified by the thirty-one scholars from translation, interpretation, terminology, cultural studies, linguistics, computational linguistics, anthropology, psychology, communication, and health sciences, from more than ten institutions in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, who have authored the content. The volume provides the reader with detailed accounts of historical, terminological, technical, ethical, as well as various social and cultural aspects of translating and interpreting in the health sciences. Likewise, the extensive list of references – more than one thousand scientific journal articles, books, webpages, guidelines, and institutional reports – after section notes, further reading suggestions, arrays of related topics, and a handful of informative tables, figures, and lists convey to the reader the breadth and depth of this interdisciplinary area. Students, professors, researchers, and professionals from communication, language sciences, and the health-related fields interested in the intersection of language and health will certainly profit from this broad and captivating examination of concepts, methods, and practices in the health humanities.

The first part of the book is a brief yet broad account of medical translations. In section 1, Elaine van Dalen shows us that the language of medicine and medical research is not an exception to the evolution of scientific languages, demonstrating how medical texts in Eastern regions were influenced by events related to imperial power, sponsorship, and beliefs; and how translators played an active role in spreading medical knowledge. In section 2, Ji-Hae Kang discusses *Translations of Western medical texts in East Asia* from approximately 1850 to 1939, comparing the way Western medical knowledge was disseminated in Japan, China, and Korea. The chapter depicts the nonlinearity of the

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translation process and the conflict experienced in these countries due to the introduction of medical knowledge with a biomedical tradition (i.e., Western) in the name of progress and the reaffirmation of traditional eastern ways of practising medicine and understanding health, as well as social and cultural values. Lastly, in section 3, Carmen Quijada Diez explores translation as a well-established course of medical research dissemination. The author sketches the development of medical translation starting in ancient Greece and continues with the Middle Ages and the School of Translators of Toledo, completing the map with an analysis of the impact of the printing press invention on knowledge and information distribution. The final and most stimulating part of the section is dedicated to contemporary science communication and scientific dissemination, the dominance of English in academic writing and its impact on medical publishing, authorship matters, and the effect of medical hyperspecialisation on professional practice and training programmes.

The second and perhaps most specialised part of the handbook takes the reader to the specificities of translation and the medical sciences. Joost Buyschaert begins by analysing the linguistic variation of medical terminology, how to approach it, and the role of Computer Aided Translation (CAT) tools and Machine Translation (MT) in managing medical terminology. Next, Wioleta Karwacka examines *Quality, accessibility and readability in medical translation* in close relation to patients as the focus of medical knowledge, international standards, and competencies demanded from translators and interpreters. The following section, authored by Matilde Nisbeth Brøgger and Karen Korning Zethsen, is dedicated to health communication. It explains the shift from the biomedical monologic paradigm to the current patient-centered model of healthcare with its focus on clear and comprehensible medical texts. It thus presents intralingual translation as a process by which a specialised text is translated into plain language and offers several examples of translations from a specialised to a general genre. Section 7 addresses *Machine translation in healthcare* as investigated by Barry Haddow, Alexandra Birch, and Kenneth Heafield. First, a historical overview provides the reader with the main elements of MT systems development. Then, MT evaluation is discussed, and the main categories of MT applications in healthcare are presented. The section continues with brief descriptions of MT projects implemented within healthcare from 2003 to the present. The section ends with the description of two projects in which the authors participated, offering valuable insights into the needs of successfully using MT in healthcare. Section 8, by Vicent Montalt, focuses on the crossroads of medical translation and medical humanities, foregrounding the role of persons by discussing patient-centered care, personalised medicine, and narrative medicine. The second part closes with an essay on *Knowledge translation* authored by John Ødemark, Gina Fraas Henriksen and Eivind Engebretsen, which explores the unexpected, though not surprising, resemblance between translational medicine and interlingual translation practices regarding the unavoidable transformation of the primary information contained in a source text when translated, and how conflicting it is to expect

that knowledge remains untouched during translation and at the same time is affected by its conveyance.

Parts III and IV are devoted to translation and interpreting in healthcare environments, followed by an overview of the health areas where translation and interpreting services are more frequently used. The essays in these two parts address mostly spoken translation and would have easily made a separate handbook given the myriad of fundamental issues that are analysed. Here, the content can be summed up into four major themes (1) the maturity of the field, (2) the need to create, develop or advance codes of ethics and standards of interpretation as well as regulate the profession for general healthcare scenarios and specific extreme or marginalised settings, (3) the parties involved and their role in healthcare interpretation, and (4) socially and politically prominent topics of the field.

In section 10, Bruce T. Downing discusses the state of community interpreting, especially in health-related scenarios, in terms of the roles played by the interpreters, standards, training, ethics, and research. The ethical component presented here has a follow-up in section 12, with a critical review by Robyn K. Dean, which compares generalist translation and interpretation codes of ethics and codes addressing healthcare interpreters while discussing other deontological references.

The role of informal and non-professional interpreting is outlined in section 11 by Rachele Antonini and Ira Torresi, who address translation and interpreting services carried out *by* children, the legality of this practice, the perception of the parties involved, the negative consequences of this activity as established in research, and, notably, the authors' original contribution to the investigation of child-mediated interpretation. This topic is complemented in section 17 by Anne Birgitta Nilsen, who reviews communication *for* children, demonstrating the interdisciplinarity of the subject and the need to advance research that can inform better professional practices.

Remote interpreting in healthcare is dealt with by Raquel Lázaro Gutiérrez in section 13, with a presentation of the categories and the pros and cons of this modality, as well as ethical and training-related concerns, using Australia as a reference. Then, sections 14 and 18 (by Christopher J. Moreland & Laurie Swabey, and Eva Spišiaková, respectively) discuss interpretation and disability in close association with activism. Whereas section 14 focuses on interpretation for the deaf and hard-for-hearing and, therefore, sign language, section 18 is committed to discussing disabilities in terms of sensory, physical, mental, and intellectual impairments and other limitations stemming from living with a health condition. Here, the reader can get a taste of some of the translation options used in international disability legislation and how these can hinder the social participation of people with disabilities.

Interpretation in disaster situations is examined in sections 15 and 16. First, Patrick Cadwell discusses disaster settings as scenarios of translation and interpretation and best practices, technology-mediated translation and interpretation services, ethics, and training of the professionals and volunteers who work as interpreters. Tony Joakim Sandset then

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continues to explore this topic by examining the Ebola outbreaks in two countries as scenarios of medical knowledge translation.

Translation as an instrument to claim the right to freedom of choice and women's sexual and reproductive health is discussed in sections 19 (*Queer feminisms and the translation of sexual health* by Michela Baldo), 20 (*Translation and women's health* by Nesrine Bessaïh) and 21 (*Translation in maternal and neonatal health* by Şebnem Susam-Saraeva and Luciana Carvalho Fonseca). Finally, the last two sections, *Dialogue interpreting in mental healthcare: supportive interference* by Hanneke Bot and *Nutrition and translation* by Renée Desjardins, feature particularly relevant issues, given the current awareness about mental health – especially after the COVID-19 pandemic – and healthy food in the context of general well-being.

All sections are brought to the reader with thought-provoking future research directions, explicitly declared under a homonymous subtitle or contained in the conclusion sections or final remarks. The investigation routes convey the topicality of health humanities and propose innovative and unexplored matters within translation and interpreting studies. Anybody who is interested in medical translation, health humanities and their current developments will expand their knowledge of these areas and draw inspiration for possible interdisciplinary research projects.

About the author: Milaydis Sosa Napolskij works at the Knowledge Management Unit of FMUP and the R&D Unit CINTESIS of the Associate Laboratory RISE. She is a Specialist in Terminology and Translation and a Doctor in Language Sciences. Her research interests focus on linguistic variation and interdisciplinary matters of health and language sciences.