

BOOK REVIEW

Interpreting Technologies – Current and Future Trends

Edited by Gloria Corpas Pastor and Bart Defrancq, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2023. (ISBN 9789027214133).

Received: 23 March 2024; Revised: 02 April 2024; Published: 19 May 2024

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Interpreting technology has gained great momentum in the past decade. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for the use of technology in various forms, leading to a shift in the provision of interpreting services. The emerging interpreting technologies, ranging from remote interpreting to automated speech translation, have also raised a series of issues, which call for a reconsideration of the relationship between interpreters and technologies.

This volume, edited by Gloria Corpas Pastor and Bart Defrancq, brings together a broad range of theoretical and practical contributions in the field of interpreting technologies, aiming to offer readers a broad picture of current technologies and associated endeavors, and point out some challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The book consists of twelve chapters in total, which can be grouped into five sections: Section I (Chapters 1-4), Section II (Chapters 5-6), Section III (Chapters 7-8), Section IV (Chapters 9-11), and Section V (Chapter 12).

The first section opens with a historical overview of digital pens (Chapter 1) by Marc Orlando who makes suggestions about equipment and potential future initiatives that would benefit interpreting



students, educators, and researchers. Joshua Goldsmith, the author of Chapter 2, a UN- & EU-accredited interpreter, considers the strengths and shortcomings of tablets for interpreting and gaps in tablet interpreting research, and concludes by outlining six key directions for future research on tablet interpreting. With a chronological description of the CAI (Computer-assisted Interpreting) tools' development, Chapter 3 (by Claudio Fantinuoli) touches upon the ethical issues of AI-based technologies including data confidentiality and algorithm bias that need to be further addressed. Chapter 4 (by Diana Singureanu and colleagues) examines the challenges of video remote interpreting modality through a case study of extradition court hearings in England and puts forward some solutions to mitigate the negative impact on the proceedings. The four chapters all conclude with potential avenues and future directions for interpreting research.

The second section consists of two survey studies on the perceptions of technology use in public service interpreting. Chapter 5 coauthored by Hélène Stengers, Raquel Lázaro Gutiérrez, and Koen Kerremans taps into public service interpreters' use of remote interpreting technologies, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of these technologies and interpreters' acceptance of the technologies in different settings of PSI (Public Service Interpreting). However the questionnaire solicits self-reported usage of remote interpreting technologies and user perceptions without any effort to measure actual usage or objective observations. The key findings from Chapter 6 by Elizabeth Deysel, from her PhD thesis, indicate that interpreters are no longer skeptical and reluctant to integrate technologies into their workflow, but they still harbor concerns regarding distraction, Wi-Fi access, and device failure.

Interpreting technologies are explored from unique angles in the third section. Xiaojun Zhang, Gloria Corpas Pastor, and Jing Zhang examine the multimodality of videoconference interpreting (VCI) and explore its potential for research endeavors in Chapter 7. The study has put forward a series of tools for meeting content analysis such as microphone arrays, speech recognition, speaker diarization, keyword spotting, summarization and computerized translation, face and gesture recognition, and conversation dynamics that can help with the future development of VCI technology. The eighth chapter titled "Embedding, extending, and distributing interpreter cognition with technology" takes a socio-cognitive perspective on interpreting in order to examine more closely the interaction of technology and interpreter cognition, in which Christopher D. Mellinger calls for re-examining models of interpreting in light of the technologized environments in which interpreters regularly work.

The following section presents assorted perspectives. Chapter 9 describes the opportunities and obstacles faced by the European Parliament in digital transformation such as inappropriate speaker location, patchy internet connection and poor equipment. Jayes also shares his opinion considering that machine interpreting is not practical at the present juncture. Through a case study of Chinook Middle



School, William D. Lewis and Jan Niehues (Chapter 10) reflect on the benefits of using speech translation in multilingual classrooms and argue that speech translation is not on the way to replace human interpreters but serves best in the group cross-talk scenario if there is no "error propagation". In Chapter 11, the independent researcher Jonathan Downie points to a possibility for synergy between human interpreting and automated speech translation so as to provide language access that is equitable, scalable, and reliable. Therefore, the positive role and impact of interpreting technology should not be simply assessed from laboratory tests of interpreting performance, it requires a deeper understanding of how these technologies interact with interpreters and fit into the organizations that run them.

This volume concludes with Chapter 12 (by Bart Defrancq), which advocates the inclusion of technology skills, knowledge, and personal and social abilities in interpreting education and training. It shows how training programs can equip trainees with technological skills and ethical principles in light of technological progress.

Six years after the publication of *Trends in E-Tools and Resources for Translators and Interpreters* (Corpas Pastor and Durán-Muñoz, 2017), this volume dedicated to interpreting technologies provides an all-embracing source for its intended readership, including interpreting learners, practitioners, and researchers. Four aspects can be highlighted in this respect. First and foremost, it covers all the major interpreting technologies ever created and applied in interpreting, which range from tablet, and digital pen to AI-driven CAI tools and video conference interpreting. Perceptions of these technologies and challenges facing different stakeholders are vividly described. Second, the contributions cover a diversity of perspectives and settings, ranging from interpreters, and interpreting institutions to users of interpreting services such as multilingual classrooms. The authors' focus on the social aspects of interpreting studies is also echoed by Franz Pöchhacker (2016). Third, it gathers contributors from a wide array of backgrounds varying from renowned practitioners and researchers, independent researchers, in-house interpreters, and Ph.D. students. The research methods adopted run from case studies, and survey reports to epistemology framework analysis. Fourth, published at a critical moment when interpreting is facing unprecedented technological shifts, it unveils the inevitable transition toward remote and virtual modalities of interpreting in the post-pandemic era, which can also serve as a baseline for future studies. Furthermore, it aims to encourage interpreters to leverage the role and affordances of technologies for greater availability, scalability, and reliability while minimizing the adverse impact on the communication between interpreters and audiences.

Despite the aforementioned merits, the volume has room for improvement in a few aspects. First, though the collection covers a wide range of perspectives and geographical areas, the inclusion of clients' perceptions of interpreting with and without technologies would have been appreciated. Second, scant attention has been given to process-oriented technology use in real-time conference



interpreting, which needs to be further explored for the benefit of education and enhancement training of professional interpreters.

On the whole, this book, intended for MA and Ph.D. students, practitioners, and scholars, is a highly valuable addition to interpreting research. It features useful contributions on various types of technologies and interpreting settings, and it also takes into consideration a wide range of issues faced by different stakeholders, reflecting the breadth and depth of the interplay of interpreters and technologies. Notably, the insightful exploration will further inspire scholars to embrace new reflections on the future and empower interpreters to better adapt to the hybrid modalities in our constantly changing world.

Declarations and Acknowledgment:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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