

## BOOK REVIEWS

Claudia V. Angelelli & Brian James Baer (eds.). (2015) *Researching Translation and Interpreting*. London: Routledge. xvii + 292 pp.

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The last 50 years have witnessed the rapid growth of empirical research and descriptive studies on translation and interpreting (T&I) as well as the appearance of degree programs in Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) throughout the world. *Researching Translation and Interpreting*, edited by Claudia V. Angelelli and Brian James Baer, is coming out at the right time; it presents a comprehensive view of current research directions in TIS, outlines the theoretical concepts underpinning that research, and presents detailed discussions of the various methods used.

The book contains an impressive 25 contributions by leading experts. It is divided into three parts and also includes an introduction and index. The volume responds to the growing diversification of the field by offering a synthetic view and bringing together dimensions that are often kept separate: pure and applied research, translation and interpreting, empirical and theoretical research, and qualitative and quantitative paradigms. These features make it different from comparable publications.

There are several similar works dealing with methods for TIS, the most systematic and comprehensive of which is undoubtedly *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies* by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014). The major differences between Saldanha and O'Brien's work and the volume under review lie in four respects. Firstly, the volume under review includes interpreting of spoken and signed language in addition to translation. Secondly, it offers a brief history of theories and models developed outside of TIS for translation- and interpreting-related research, thus contributing to a wider historical study of theories. For example, Sergey Tyulenev points out that the notion of 'role' can be traced back as far as to "Shakespeare's famous metaphor of human life: All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (17). Thirdly, the volume links different definitions of theories and research methods, explains their origins and the state of the art, and presents sample studies. In this way it facilitates the mutually interrogative relationship between theory, research and practice. Last but not least, it embraces post-structuralist approaches to TIS – rejecting essentialist claims, traditional positivist concepts, such as equivalence and fidelity, and the stasis of earlier linguistically-based models.

Part I, "Exploring translation and interpreting" (5–14), consists in an introductory essay in which the editors discuss the above-mentioned features of a post-structuralist or post-positivist approach to research on translation- and interpreting-related phenomena. This part outlines the basic components of the various research stages, which begin with the statement of the problems but do not necessarily follow one another in a particular order. The essay starts with the editors' panoramic interdisciplinary definition of TIS. They assume that "researching TIS today means researching transgression and re-construction, the displacement of texts (oral, written, or signed), as well as of peoples and communities (authors, readers, speakers, audiences, providers and recipients of information, translators, interpreters, and interlocutors), through space and time" (5). Acknowledging the transformational potential of this interdisciplinarity, the editors propose a merging of research paradigms "developed in the hard sciences and social sciences, and in the humanities, specifically in the field of literary studies" (6), and they address language "both as an object of study and as a vehicle for the cultural and communicative construction of that object, that is, language as a set of observable behaviors and at the same time as a generator and communicator of ideologies" (*ibid.*). As Angelelli (2004, 24) has previously argued, the closed circle in which prescriptive codes and anecdotes continue to influence the training and professional identity of interpreters "leads to a complex field of practice lacking the insights of interdisciplinary research and theory and losing the opportunity to contribute to theory development" (9). Therefore, the authors suggest creating a mutually interrogative relationship linking theory, research and practice. The editors point out that the research process can be dealt with in terms of stages, depending on the approach and the nature of the research, and conclude that "new research directions will emerge from within Translation and Interpreting Studies proper, as well as any number of other fields that choose to take the translation/interpreting turn" (12).

Part II, "Mapping the field" (15–154) includes 11 contributions, and presents a conceptual mapping of current translation and interpreting research. It discusses a wide range of underlying theoretical models and concepts, often borrowed and adopted/adapted from other fields: agency and role (Sergey Tyulenev), bilingualism and multilingualism (Claudia V. Angelelli), cognitive process (Erik Angelone, Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow, and Gary Massey), collaborative and volunteer translation and interpreting (Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo), fictional representations of translators and interpreters (Klaus Kaindl), gender and sexuality (Brian James Baer and Françoise Massardier-Kenney), history and historiography (María Manuela Fernández Sánchez), translation and interpreting pedagogy (Sonia Colina and Claudia V. Angelelli), power and conflict (Anna Strowe), profession, identity, and status (Rakefet Sela-Sheffy), and reader-response and reception theory (Leo Tak-hung Chan). Almost all of the contributions show a structure

featuring an overview, theoretical foundations, evolution of the topic in TIS, key studies, and new directions.

Due to space restrictions, I will only elaborate on one of the chapters by way of example. “Bilingualism and multilingualism” by Claudia V. Angelelli explores the study of bi/multilingualism and its deep relatedness to T&I at both the individual and the societal level and assumes that conceptualizations of bi/multilingualism in the era of the “global village” are greatly different from those of the past. This is “of particular relevance when discussing T&I pedagogies [...] or when assessing bilingual individuals who apply to T&I programs or claim language expertise when applying for a job” (35). Angelelli assumes that “bi/multilingualism is central to TIS” (35), discusses recent studies in cognitive advantages of bilingualism in children, individual bilingualism and T&I ability, and some key studies in related research areas. She points out that the current study of bi/multilingualism and T&I has approached the topic of how a foreign or second language impacts translator or interpreter’s performance “through a single disciplinary lens (e.g., linguistic, psycholinguistic, or sociolinguistic)” (39). She suggests new forward-looking directions for addressing “complex questions with an interdisciplinary lens” (39) by bringing together hitherto fragmented theoretical areas of TIS.

Part III, “Research methods” (155–279), explores the major methodological approaches to research in TIS. This section is composed of 13 contributions, addressing action research (Brenda Nicodemus and Laurie Swabey), bibliometric studies (Luc van Doorslaer), case studies (Bernd Meyer), conversation analysis (Laura Gavioli), corpus-based studies (Leonardo Giannossa), critical discourse analysis (Ian Mason), ethnography of communication (Edmund Asare), experimental research (Daniel Gile), *histoire croisée* (Michaela Wolf), interviews and focus groups (Ursula Böser), narrative analysis (Mona Baker), observations (Claudio Baraldi and Christopher D. Mellinger), and survey-based studies (Sanjun Sun).

A brief glimpse of one contribution may help to sketch a picture of Part III. “Action research” by Brenda Nicodemus and Laurie Swabey offers several definitions of action research from different approaches that emerged from different research traditions. The authors attribute the origin of action research to the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the United States during the 1940s, and offer an analysis of its development and flourishing in education and other disciplines. They also assume that the use of action research in T&I “is relatively new and primarily appears in the literature on interpreter education and translator education” (160). The authors provide three sample studies, including an example of action research with the aim of collaboratively developing a curriculum for teaching ad hoc interpreters of languages of lesser diffusion (162). They conclude that “action research offers one approach for reducing the gap between theory and practice in TIS by developing partnerships among practitioners, researchers, and community

members to investigate, evaluate, and implement concrete solutions to the problem they face” (164), and make some recommendations for further reading.

Due to rapidly advancing technology and easy access to large-scale corpora, it has become more urgent than ever before to undertake interdisciplinary and quantitative research on T&I. The volume can be regarded as a timely contribution to this project. Several particular merits of the book deserve to be highlighted. What strikes me most about *Researching Translation and Interpreting* is the book’s coherent organization and structure, which always takes the reader from the overview of theories and methodological models, to key studies, and to new directions in this field for the future. A second positive feature is that the text is extremely reader-friendly. The contributors are all leading experts who have published extensively in their respective areas and who have clearly gone the extra mile to take their target readers into consideration. Third, a wide range of source materials and research topics are covered in the discussion.

That being said, I wish to make two minor points of critique. First, little attention is given to translation localization which is an important topic in the applied branch of TIS. Second, almost all of the authors come from Western countries, exceptions being Sanjun Sun (Beijing, but with a PhD from Kent State University) and Leo Tak-hung Chan (Lingnan, but with a PhD from Indiana University). As a result, research results by scholars from Eastern countries with a long history of translation (such as China) are strongly underrepresented in the volume.

To conclude, *Researching Translation and Interpreting* is an impressive source-book for students and new scholars in the field of TIS, as well as for practitioners interested in contributing to research. This volume will also be of great help to doctoral students and scholars in disciplines across the humanities and social sciences who are interested in language study and T&I.

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## References

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