Todorova, Marija and Lucia Ruiz Rosendo (eds.) (2021) *Interpreting Conflict: A comparative framework,* Palgrave Studies in Languages at War, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 320 pp., ISBN 978-3-030-66908-9 (hard copy) ISBN 978-3-030-66909-6 (eBook), EUR 139.09 (hard copy)/106.00 (eBook)

Translation and interpreting have acquired an entirely new dimension in view of the recent mobility brought about by conflict, which has forced interpreting and cultural mediation into the public eye, brought attention to the structural shortcomings of institutions in adequately addressing interpreting needs and, often, offering relevant interpreting training (see e.g. IOM 2021). Within academia, it has generated an unprecedented interest in the context in which interpreting transpires: namely, conflict and crisis. Given the constant crises the modern world is facing through globally impactful events—such as the Syrian war, the Russia-Ukraine war, environmental disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic—and the new often unofficial, fragmented and 'urgent' settings in which interpreting is practiced, *Interpreting Conflict: A comparative framework* constitutes a welcome and timely addition to the state-of-the-art in conflict, crisis, humanitarian and post-humanitarian interpreting. The book provides valuable insights not just for Translation and Interpreting scholars, but also scholars in Trauma Studies, Memory Studies, as well as Humanitarian Logistics, Refugee Studies and Crisis Management Studies.

Crucially, as Rosendo mentions in her introduction, this book benefits from an instrumental distinction between conflict and post-conflict/humanitarian interpreting settings, which, admittedly, involve different actors, require different skills and have very different impact. By doing so, the book re-envisions the spaces and situations where 'crisis' interpreting transpires. In fact, while research on interpreters in conflict zones has been relatively well pursued (see e.g. Salama-Carr 2007; Inghilleri 2008, 2009), post-conflict contexts remain largely unexplored. At the same time, the work offers a unique perspective into the topic, not only solely on the basis of the diverse geographical contexts it explores but, pivotally, due to many of the contributors having experience as field activists and practitioners. Their contributions thus bridge the gap between academia and practice, and produce invaluable insights.

Both conflict and post-conflict interpreting settings constitute potential trauma-ridden contexts from the vantage point of all involved parties: service users, the wider affected communities and, crucially, interpreters themselves. From this perspective, *Interpreting Conflict: A comparative framework* throws light onto some of the issues, contexts and practices tackled by this special issue of *New Voices* dedicated to 'Trauma and Interpreting'. Though not tackled explicitly through the frame of trauma, the first three chapters of Part II draw on a variety of historical material and archives—e.g., (auto)biographies, trial records, oral histories—to examine phenomena of hostility and distrust towards interpreters. Therefore, they bring into sharp focus the trauma, anxiety and guilt that emerge from the clash between interpreters' identities and their role as interpreters, the ethical dilemmas they are confronted with, as well as the power, conflicts and inequalities that emerge in highly hierarchical spaces, such as that of the military. More specifically, Takedo in **Chapter 2** looks at second-generation Japanese Americans and Canadians working for the Japanese military and the cost that came with their dual citizenship and identity in the aftermath of the Asia-Pacific War, when many of them were tried for treason by the Allied forces. Luo and Zhu in **Chapter 3** operationalize loyalty, employing it as a conceptual category through which the interpreter's role is approached when looking at interpreters serving Japanese forces within the context of the second Sino-Japanese War and the consequences that loyalty—seen both as virtue and vice, with degrees of salience—can have on interpreters. In the context of the Korean conflict, Kim in **Chapter 4** looks at the crucial role interpreters played in the United States Army Military Government set up in South Korea (1945–1948), examining issues of power relations between Korean interpreters and military personnel, how interpreting can emerge as an act of obedience or disobedience, and the suspicion with which interpreters are often treated when seen as representatives of a foreign power. All the above illuminate interpreting in contexts where multilingualism and multiculturalism are not seen as encounters but clashes, further embodied by interpreters who internalize two cultures or power structures diversely, often leading to trauma, dissociation and, in extreme cases, charges of treason.

Questions of distrust and (false) allegiance also emerge in Gómez-Amich's study in **Chapter 5,** which moves to the Afghan context and draws on a narrative approach to analyze interviews with both locally recruited interpreters and Spanish military personnel deployed in Afghanistan.

Gómez-Amich observes that interpreters in conflict zones exercise a higher level of agency than normally expected as they mediate between substantially different cultural norms in highly tense interpreting events. They thus deal with ethical dilemmas, constantly negotiating the boundaries between their cultural and professional identities. Moreno-Bello in **Chapter 6** draws on the notion of framing (Baker 2019) to analyze interviews with interpreters working with Spanish troops in Lebanon, and shows how interpreters mobilize their cultural knowledge and exercise their agency to negotiate between often clashing ideologies and to avoid conflict in the interpreting event. Both of these chapters throw light on the complexities that emerge in interpreting interactions in conflict and post-conflict, trauma and post-trauma contexts. In **Chapter 7,** Méndez Sánchez draws on her personal experience as soldier and mediator working in Senegal to sketch the military as a heterogeneous field, where interpreting is highly uncodified and not well-defined. In discussing interpreting risk factors, Méndez Sánchez refers to linguistic and cultural diversity, as Senegal has six official languages including French. Senegal itself can be seen as a post-trauma context, where interpreters can find themselves caught in the dynamics and inequalities emerging from the coexistence of a 'colonial language' (see Diallo 2010) and other, previously oppressed local languages.

The last two chapters of Part I look at the repercussions that conflict can have on interpreters, albeit from two radically different perspectives. In **Chapter 8**, Ruiz Rosendo treats fiction as an intangible cultural artifact capable of writing interpreters into the cultural memory of the war in Iraq from the Spanish perspective. In exploring the interpreter's representation in two Spanish war novels set in Iraq, Ruiz Rosendo not only bears witness to fiction's capacity to capture the trauma of war, but also the post-war trauma faced by many interpreters stranded by Western forces in hostile environments who treated them like traitors. In **Chapter 9**, Hess provides a powerful account of what can be seen as 'injustice trauma'. More specifically, Hess looks at how perceptions of translators/interpreters often captured in the innocent-looking adage 'translator-traitor' and a pre 9/11 festering climate of Islamophobia forged a toxic combination leading to state-sanctioned and systemic distrust towards Arab interpreters in the post 9/11 US context, culminating in the unjust prosecution of two Arabic linguists.

Part II shifts the focus from the military context to the humanitarian context of interpreting. To different degrees, the first two chapters in this part aptly touch upon the emotional load experienced by interpreters working in conflict and/or crisis situations. Barea Muñoz in **Chapter** 10 engages with trauma in interpreting from two perspectives: (i) interpreting for victims of trauma—interviewing interpreters working with Palestinians who have been in some ways traumatized by the Israel-Palestine conflict—and (ii) traumatized interpreters, who, on the one hand, relive the trauma of their service users through closeness, and on the other, might become ostracized professionally, as their own identity as Palestinians might impede them from getting hired. Barea Muñoz approaches all these issues through constructing a paradigmatic narrative, representative of the experiences of 11 different interpreters. Haidar Ahmad in **Chapter 11** investigates the dual identity of United Nations Arabic interpreters on missions in the context of the Arab Spring, comparing the experiences of two interpreters deployed in the country of origin of one of the interpreters. By doing so, Haidar Ahmad highlights the ethical dilemmas and emotional load experienced by interpreters when multiple (i.e. professional, cultural, etc.) identities might be activated.

The following three chapters of this part investigate interpreting for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in what have been commonly called contexts or countries of reception. Interpreters in such contexts primarily deal with displaced and traumatized civilians, and are often called to negotiate between different cultural norms and between professional ethical codes and their own positionality. Through a qualitative and ethnographic study, Radicioni, in **Chapter 12,** throws light onto the complex inter- and cross-cultural acrobatics interpreters need to engage in to ensure that cultural differences do not hinder victims of war and migrants from gaining proper access to healthcare services. The NGO Radicioni studies offers healthcare services to individuals in Italy who have reached Europe in hope of better circumstances but who often end up exploited, and for whom proper cultural mediation is crucial for effective medical care. In **Chapter 13,** Martín-Ruel looks at the interpreting services offered within the context of a number of NGOs working in the reception of refugees in Andalusia, Spain. Martín-Ruel identifies a number of issues related to the blurred boundaries of the interpreter's role—such as lack of trust from both beneficiaries and organizations, excessive empathy, partiality, etc.—all of which the author primarily traces back to the lack of proper professional training. Todorova's

discussion in **Chapter 14** problematizes principles associated with an interpreters' code of ethics, such as impartiality and neutrality, which, in the context of (post)humanitarian crises, acquire new meaning. By investigating interpreting for refugees in Hong Kong after the Vietnam conflict, and by illuminating aspects of interpreters' practices/identity—their non-professional status; the requests to verify the background of refugees; their own status as refugees—Todorova shows how core ethical principles are renegotiated in such contexts.

In the **final chapter of Part II**, Baudo and Fernanda Lorenzo's discussion shifts the geographical context to Latin America and the setting from humanitarian to conference interpreting. The authors present their experience at an international conference organized by the United Nations Development Program and the Argentinian government, in which refugees and migrants also participated. This chapter offers invaluable information for interpreters working in crisis situations, as it highlights that the interpreter's task is often an exercise in crossing (inter)national borders (e.g. relating a refugee's experience within a different culture) and liaising in a context of power differentials (e.g. vulnerable groups, policy makers, officials, etc.), where proper communication can not only effectively relate refugees' experiences but can lead to beneficial policies for victims of war or crisis.

In the concluding chapter of the collected volume, Todorova brings the discussion together primarily from the positionality of the interpreter, either in contexts of conflict, where interpreters are positioned as trustworthy and loyal or untrustworthy and disloyal, or in humanitarian contexts, where they are positioned as insiders or outsiders. What emerges clearly from this collected volume is that issues of distance and proximity, neutrality and impartiality cut across both interpreting contexts irrespective of geographical or historical situation. Therefore, they should be addressed systematically, especially in the context of humanitarian crises, which often involve urgent circumstances and vulnerable individuals and serve as spaces where civil society is confronted with national and international structures, policies, and policy makers. Crucially, this volume highlights that lack of consistent training for interpreters and other agents involved in crisis situations or crisis relief can be detrimental, as the indefinability of their role could have serious consequences on individuals living in trauma or post-trauma, conflict or post-conflict contexts.

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