

Marlene Verhoef and Theodorus du Plessis, eds
Multilingualism and Educational Interpreting

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The publication has been issued as the latest volume of the Van Schaik series, *Studies in Language Policy in South Africa*. Although embedded mainly in the South African context, the series is well known globally and important for the studies of multilingual communities in general. The previous volumes were devoted to crucial topics connected to multilingualism and language planning, such as government, the judiciary and security services, education and social integration, electronic management, the politics of language, and exclusion. This particular volume, also dealing with an important sphere of language practice of the new South African reality, is unique however, in the sense that the practice of educational interpreting is a pioneering field globally. The articles deal with a range of topics from the general South African language political context, educational interpreting as a new genre, the challenges that it faces and its comparisons with other fields of interpreting. What makes this book particularly valuable, however, is the fact that its contributors are scholars who are not only interested in the topic from the theoretical point of view, but are also engaged in the matter practically, trying to develop schemes that would facilitate the implementation of the in-class interpreting programmes on the tertiary level.

The first two articles in the collection deal with the place of the educational interpreting programmes within the framework of language policy in South Africa. In their article, "Educational Interpreting: A Means to Bridge the Policy Gap in Pursuit of a Multilingual Educational System in South Africa?," Marlene Verhoef and Theodorus du Plessis put forward a sketch of the language policy development in South Africa with special focus on the multilingual context. They investigate the reasons for the problems with implementing the language-in-education policy and arrive at the conclusion that educational interpreting seem to be one of the plausible ways in which the 'so-called implementation' gap could be dealt with. On the other hand, in his article "Educational Interpreting at the University of the Free State: A Language Policy Analysis," Theodorus du Plessis presents the sketch of

the language policy at bilingual higher education institutions as well as language policy development at the University of the Free State. In particular he relates to a pilot project on "simultaneous interpreting services during lectures," with respect to which he tries to assess whether the language policy of the UFS's "provides an enabling framework for educational interpreting as a viable alternative to (or in support of) the institution's 'core' language policy of parallel medium education" (Du Plessis 2010: 19).

The next seven articles are devoted to different questions concerning the educational interpreting project at the North-West University. Johan Blaauw, in the article "Towards a Model for the Training of Educational Interpreters," puts forward a description of the interpreting training model developed at the NWU, which includes a practical description of the training programme for educational interpreters. In the article "Benchmarking the Quality Management of Educational Interpreting Services Rendered at the North-West University," Marlene Verhoef advocates the need of introducing quality management for educational interpreting services, reminding us at the same time that nowhere in the world such services are rendered on such a large scale. Maristi Partridge in the article "Influences on the Interpreter's Performance in the Classroom," adopts a cognitive framework to account for various factors that may influence the performance of educational interpreters. And in the following chapter written by Elma de Kock and Johan Blaauw, "Are Longer Interpreting Turns than the Norm Possible within an Educational Interpreting Environment?," the authors present their small-scale research concerning the turn taking in the context of educational interpreting, whose main result is that interpreters in the educational context are capable of taking longer turns. The findings of the research might be interesting as a point of reference for turn taking practices in other contexts.

The next two articles, "Process, Product and Performance: Exploring the Differences Between Conference Interpreters and Educational Interpreters" by Herculene Olivier and "Assessing the Interpreting Quality of Specialist Versus Non-Subject Specialist Educational Interpreters at the North-West University" by Marlene Verhoef, discuss the nature of educational interpreting. Olivier focuses on the differences between the roles of the conference and educational interpreters. According to the scholar's observations, the key characteristics of interpreting in the educational context seems to be the role and function of the interpreter, rather than the processes and products of interpreting itself. The article is concluded by the statement that it might be speculated that educational interpreting is more closely related to community interpreting, a very important genre in a multilingual context, than to conference interpreting. Verhoef, in her article, compares two types of educational interpreters working at NWU, i.e. those with and without formal education in the topics they work with. The scholar bases her conclusions on both quantitative and qualitative data, and states that interpreting competence of the subjects of her research is not significantly affected by their expertise or its lack in their interpreting work.

The two following chapters deal with the problem of the uniqueness of the classroom discourse and what role it plays in the process of in-class interpreting and communication in general. Rhoda Bothma and Marlene Verhoef, in the article "Assessing the Role of the Interpreter in Facilitating Classroom Communication," examine the context of in-class communication, which brings speakers with different language skills together, and where

interpreters act as mediators. The article deals not only with differences in language background of the participants, but also cultural, historical and social context of the texts that students are to work with. In her next article, "Accounting for Paralanguage and Non-Verbal Communication in the Educational Interpreting Service Rendered at the North-West University," Marlene Verhoef argues that it is crucial for the interpreter to rely not only on the verbal message, but also on the non-verbal clues, as non-verbal elements constitute an important part of a proper interaction. And therefore, as the main role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication, as he or she acts as a mediator, it is important that the topic is included in the educational interpreting training.

In the last article, "Simultaneous Interpreting at High School Level in South Africa: A Case Study," Gene Mathey aims at assessing the possibility of applying the NWU educational interpreting model to the high school level. He describes the existing modes of teaching in the context of their usefulness in the additive multilingual learning environment and presents the results of his small-scale pilot study, in which he introduced the simultaneous interpreting programme to secondary schools. The article presents data which confirm that the choice of the language of a wider communication hinders the processes of teaching and learning in a multilingual classroom. The author concludes the article with several arguments for the introduction of interpreting in a school context (inclusion, rather than segregation, the improvement of the overall discipline, among others), and presents several points which indicate how educational interpreting fulfils the requirements set out in the Language-in-Education Policy.

Although this volume is embedded in the South African linguistic context, it can prove to be genuinely useful to all readers interested in multilingualism, the challenges it poses, and the practical solutions that have been developed for tackling some of the problems related to it. Moreover, it offers many tangible examples of the difficulties that the new genre of interpreting, i.e. educational interpreting, generates, which may be appreciated by those interested in interpreting, translation, conversational analysis, and other related branches of linguistics. And what is also very important, and should be highlighted, is the fact that it is the work of scholars committed to such projects that brings hope to the survival of the indigenous languages of South Africa. It was a very noble and ambitious decision to grant the status of official to as many as 11 languages; which are acknowledged as equal by the South African constitution. In reality, however, it is English that has ruled unsurpassed in such crucial domains of life as business, politics, public sphere in general, and finally, education. Therefore, projects and publications such as this one should be awaited with special interest.

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