



Book review: Introducing Interpreting Studies

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Published: March 8, 2004 Last updated: December 2, 2015

Title: Introducing Interpreting Studies

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Publisher: Routledge

Publication Date: 12/2003

Pages: 264 pages

Size: 6-1/4 x 9-1/4

ISBN Cloth: 0415268869

ISBN Paper: 0415268877

Synopsis

In the words of its author, [Introducing Interpreting Studies](#) is intended to serve as "a map of the interpreting studies landscape" (p. 205), providing orientation for newcomers to academic research related to interpreting. It succeeds admirably in its aim. This comprehensive, structured, and accessible primer will quickly become the standard textbook around which introductory courses are organised. Moreover, as a cohesive account of this nascent field in all its breadth and diversity, this timely volume stakes a convincing claim for Interpreting Studies as an academic discipline in its own right.

Contents

The book comprises ten chapters, divided into three parts: Foundations, Selected topics and research, and Directions.

Part I, Foundations, is made up of five chapters that provide what the author describes as a 'synthetic' overview of the discipline (p. 2). *Chapter 1, Concepts*, lays the conceptual groundwork, examining the definition of interpreting as the research object of interpreting studies, identifying parameters that can be applied to distinguish types and subtypes of interpreting, and offering a chart of the territory covered by interpreting theory organised around

these typological parameters together with different foregrounded research concerns. *Chapter 2, Evolution*, presents a socio-historical survey of the development of interpreting studies to date. *Chapter 3, Approaches*, examines the major disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological orientations that have informed inquiry into interpretation phenomena, and *Chapter 4, Paradigms*, builds on this discussion to review the main research traditions that have taken shape in interpreting studies so far. *Chapter 5, Models*, examines the ways in which interpreting has been modeled and presents selected examples of socio-professional, interaction, and processing models.

Part II, Selected topics and research, consists of four chapters that offer an "'analytical' presentation of the state of the art" (p. 3), through synoptic summaries of important empirical studies and other key contributions grouped into different thematic categories. *Chapter 6, Process*, surveys research that has focused on cognitive processing aspects of interpreting. *Chapter 7, Product and performance*, introduces research that has focused on interpretation output and its communicative effect (including research on quality). *Chapter 8, Practice and profession*, reviews studies and other writings related to professional issues and the concerns of practitioners (e.g. standards, ethics, working conditions). *Chapter 9, Pedagogy*, surveys the literature related to training and education.

Part III, Directions, consists of one chapter of the same title in which the author sums up the major trends and key issues in the development of Interpreting Studies as a discipline, offers predictions about its future, and ends with advice to beginning researchers.

Evaluation

All in all, the book is thoroughly researched, well organised, clearly written, and eminently user-friendly. It will be particularly useful for instructors of introductory courses on interpreting-related research and for beginning researchers working on topic selection and the early stages of their literature review. Its publication represents a major contribution to the field of Interpreting Studies.

As a 'map' of the field, this book leaves little to be desired. Its coverage is remarkably comprehensive, bringing together research on conference, legal, community, and sign language interpreting, with balanced treatment given to different research paradigms. The author is keenly aware of the "overwhelming degree of diversity and difference" that characterizes Interpreting Studies and of the significant role that a first textbook in an emerging new discipline can play in "reaffirm[ing] linkages, relations, and common ground" (p. 4) and thereby in promoting cross-fertilization and integration of its disparate strands. The author's vision of "unity in diversity" is admirably executed, bringing new cohesion to this nascent field and staking a convincing claim for Interpreting Studies as an academic discipline in its own right.

Within this integrated approach, the text is logically organised around topical themes, making it highly navigable. Moreover, at the level of each chapter, the section and sub-section headings, text links, and in-text bolding of keywords make it easy to find content of specific interest, and separate author and subject indexes at the end of the book contribute additional functionality. This "map" is therefore not only comprehensive, but also easy to consult. Yet "portal" may be an even more apt metaphor for this textbook, insofar as its greatest utility is as a springboard into the primary literature. At the end of each chapter, there is a selection of sources and readings provided for each of the themes covered in that chapter. These are well-chosen and up-to-date references that represent a good point of departure for further reading. More leads are available in the 23-page bibliography and separate selection of Internet links (including further sources of bibliographical information that are regularly updated).

The panorama presented in *Introducing Interpreting Studies* reflects both the nature of this book as an introductory survey textbook and, to a greater extent, the present state of this fledgling discipline, in that it exhibits more breadth than depth. In particular, the collection of mini-abstracts in Part II seems to tell us more about what has been studied than what is actually

known. Contradictory findings are presented back-to-back, making it clear that many of the most fundamental issues of Interpreting Studies are still far from settled. This can only be seen as pointing to the need for training more researchers to look deeper into this hugely complex research object. It is certain that this book will inspire a growing number of research efforts, over time adding depth to the various lines of inquiry that collectively make up Interpreting Studies.

Recommended citation format:

Andrew C. DAWRANT. "Book review: Introducing Interpreting Studies". *aiic.net* March 8, 2004. <<http://aiic.net/p/1395>>.