

**SETTON, ROBIN, ed. (2011): *Interpreting Chinese, Interpreting China*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 188 p.**

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4. Voir : *Institut canadien d'information juridique*. Consulté le 22 février 2012, <<http://www.canlii.org/en/mb/mbca/doc/1984/1984canlii42/1984canlii42.html>>.

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With the new millennium, an unprecedented surge of academic publications on translation and interpretation appeared in China, reflecting the flourishing of translation studies worldwide since the 1970s as well as China's ever increasing contact and interaction with the rest of the world. What took place in the field of translation studies and what happened for Chinese interpretation researchers after China re-engaged spectacularly with the world? Robin Setton tries to answer this in his latest book, *Interpreting Chinese, Interpreting China*, a collection of essays from China. As the editor suggests in his introduction to the book, these articles present an overview of the profession, training and research into interpreting in China since he believes "a re-emergent China must be interpreted to the rest of the world by its own people" (p. 3). His title for the book clearly refers both to interpretation in China and Chinese researchers' interpretation of the practice of interpreting in China, and aims to help "an international readership to understand": "What appears to Western eyes as a closed, self-referential society is proudly defended from within as a culture of self-sufficiency, refinement and self-empowerment through selective integration" (p. 3). His goodwill, as an interpreter/editor, to both the Chinese academic community and to readers outside is evidenced in the collection of six papers, one report about interpreter training and research in Mainland China, and two reviews of textbooks authored by experienced Chinese trainer-practitioners.

The first paper concerns the traditional Chinese perception of interpreting and translation (*yi* in Chinese), as presented in the historical records of interpreting activities at a first-century tributary event. The standard archives show three perspectives of *yi*, which, to the interpreting service patron, was a channel for cross-cultural knowledge and political governance propaganda; to the interpreter, a passive figure in interpreting activities and hence a "cultural ambassador" to promote Chinese culture and administration abroad; to the Emperor, simply a tool to celebrate his reign. Although interpreting and translation were highly instrumental in the historical event, it implies the interpreter as invisible man, serving

as both linguistic and cultural go-between and the link to historical records.

Sign-language interpreting (SLI), as a profession in the very earliest stages of its development in China, has not received its due attention in translation studies and required a questionnaire survey of the status of SLI in mainland China to fill in empty spaces on the map of knowledge. The second paper offers a descriptive study of the SLI profession in China, in terms of the profile of the sign-language interpreters, the features of the Chinese SLI market, professional issues, interpreting difficulties and directionality, quality issues and the role of the interpreters.

The third contribution in this group presents some of the research carried out in the linguistics field, examining how interpreters handle address names and pronouns during Q&A sessions at international conferences. This research was based on linguistic data gathered at two international conferences held in Taipei and shows that the use of forms of address and pronouns by questioners is influenced by their languages of choice, which in turn spurred the interpreters mediate and facilitate the bi-directional communication.

"Interpreting Cantonese Utterance-final in Bilingual Courtroom Discourse" focuses on the functions of Cantonese utterance-final particles in a Chinese bilingual courtroom, and the linguistic devices that the interpreters resorted to. The Cantonese utterance-final particles are unique linguistic features, not available in English, which created a difficult situation for a distinct interpreting community and provided interpreters with a unique experience that European researchers would overlook. In analyzing the strategic devices of interpreters in the courtroom, the two writers did pioneering work into the categorization of linguistic resources while also revealing the possibility for interpreters to capture most of the factual and emotive information in these utterance-final particles.

The fifth article deals with the development of trainees in achieving coherence in their interpretations. For this purpose, Gracie Peng, the author, designed a meticulous experiment framed in Rhetorical Structure Theory. The well-designed test, in which a corpus of consecutive interpretations is segmented into functional units and mapped into a tree-like RST description, shows the gap between novice and professional interpreters graphically and statistically. This provides a visualized analytic instrument for academic researchers that can also serve as a feedback tool for the trainees. Through this research project the author proves that quality awareness can help trainees explicitly progress in conveying global coherence.

With the demands for training interpreters/translators and controlling certification examinations, translation quality evaluation gained prominence in China during this decade. "Translation quality is a problematical concept if it is taken to involve individual and externally motivated value judgment alone." (House 2001: 255) In reaction to this, the sixth article, by Lui and Chiu, aims to meet the demands of scientific objectivity in assessing interpreting and researches into quantifiable measures and holistic judgment of source material difficulty. The authors examined the difficulty of three source materials in terms of readability based on the Flesch Reading Ease formula, information density and new concept density based on propositional analysis, and expert judgment based on a questionnaire survey. They then calculated Pearson's correlation coefficients to determine the correlations of the four factors with the scores of the test group's interpreting performance. Statistical analysis shows that "the source material difficulty affected the performance of lower-skilled interpreters more than that of higher-skilled interpreters." (p. 135)

The report, "Interpreter training and research in mainland China: Recent developments," sketches out the current status of the interpreter training and presents the historical development of translation studies in mainland China. One of the contributors, Mu Lei, witnessed the development of translation studies into an autonomous discipline. She is a key promoter of training programs and a leading figure in curriculum design with a keen insight into the progress in interpreter training and research, as well as the problems facing China in this regard. As the editor put it, "interpreter training in China now finds itself in a transition phase combining both promise and challenge" (p. 4). Translation and interpretation have recently been regarded as key to promoting Chinese cultural discourse power, which leads to government management and regulation of the interpreting industry so it will logically receive considerable attention and support from the authorities. However, as the authors point out, there are challenges and problems in interpreter training, such as the range of training objectives of different programs, the lack of qualified staff, and the integration of valuable international experience into Chinese interpreter training, all challenges inherent to the recent boom in professionalization of translation and interpreting.

While many issues in interpreter training still appear controversial, there had in recent years been a proliferation of translation and interpreting course books in China, most of which, as the editor says, are "of the DIY variety" (p. 5). However, two highly regarded interpretation textbooks evaluated

in the review section are distinguished from other course books by being authored by experienced trainer-practitioners and are fully skill-oriented for the users. One is the outcome of a four-year joint project supported academically by the University of Westminster, and the other is a corpus-based work from authentic interpreting practice. Their widespread use in Chinese interpreting classrooms is testimony to their high quality and proven influence representative of interpreting textbooks by Chinese trainers.

The remarkable selection and intent of these contributions makes this volume an insightful observation of Chinese interpreting and interpreting research. But the book must be read from a dual perspective. One is that the book is an "*Integration of things foreign*" (p. 3) into the Chinese experience. Clearly, the single focus of research in these papers is Chinese interpreting. However, owing to the free-floating theories of a globalized world, influences from the West can be readily discerned in both the theoretical perspectives and the research methods. When the Chinese interpreting experience was analyzed in the Western perspective, the Chinese interpreting scene was expressed by the contributors to the international readership. Such an interpretation shows the limits of the book:

if the text describes a situation which has elements peculiar to the natural environment, institutions and culture of its language area, there is an inevitable loss of meaning, since the transference to or rather the substitution or replacement by the translator's language can only be approximate. (Newmark 1981: 7)

The mix of Western perspectives and Chinese issues helps the contributors to utter Chinese voices but at the same time paradoxically alters their purpose, although it can be "selective integration," as the editor says. Unfortunately, the international readership can only partially adduce "the claims for the uniqueness of interpreting from or into Chinese" (p. 3), which has been an important part of translation studies since the turn of millennium.

The other is that the book contributes to the editor's overall goal, although no single book can give a full and accurate account of the true condition of the interpreting industry, the interpreting training and research in China. In addition to the brief introduction to the history of translation studies and interpreting in China by Mu Lei and her co-author, the topics of these papers ranged from ancient Chinese interpreting to today's interpreting professionalization, from international conference interpreting to court interpreting, from sign-language interpreting to consecutive interpreting, from interpreting

training to interpreting evaluation, which covers all related branches of Chinese interpreting and presents “the features of the Chinese interpreting scene” (p. 2). The contributors from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the mainland constructed a whole map of Chinese interpreting and its research, and found a way in this book to express the latest research results, which have already deflected speculative discussion and practitioners’ personal narratives about practice and training in the early stage of translation studies in China. The eagerness of the Chinese interpreting community to make contact and express itself is apparent in reading between the lines of these papers. While readers are not fully apprised of the past and present efforts of Chinese interpreters and academic researchers, this book will surely prove valuable since it opens a window for those outside to glimpse the present status of interpreting practice and research in China, and for those “Chinese interpreters” inside to contact the outside world and show their potential. Thus it is a stimulating and inspiring book.

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- LOMBEZ, CHRISTINE, dir. (2012): *Traduire en langue française en 1830*. Arras: Artois Presses Université, 208 p.
- Ce volume comprend 13 textes qui ont d’abord fait l’objet d’une présentation orale lors du colloque « Traduire en langue française en 1830 » tenu à Nantes les 13, 14 et 15 novembre 2008<sup>1</sup>. Malgré cette origine, qui suppose toujours une plus grande variété thématique et méthodologique que dans un volume dont les parties ont initialement été conçues comme complémentaires, présentant donc *a priori* une cohérence forte, l’ensemble ici décrit a néanmoins une unité, assurée en premier lieu par une délimitation chronologique très précise (1830) et, ensuite, par le fait que la langue d’arrivée des textes pris en compte est, dans tous les cas, le français. Comme nous le verrons, les objets d’étude sélectionnés y sont néanmoins variés – presse, roman, etc. mais aussi réflexions autour du phénomène de la traduction dite historique ou encore contextualisation sous divers points de vue (culturel, littéraire, etc.), de traductions, etc. –, tout

comme l’est le traitement qu’on leur assure. Pourtant, les experts en traductologie historique, mais aussi les historiens et les spécialistes en littérature et en littérature comparée y trouveront amplement leur compte, comme nous essaierons de le montrer.

Dans un texte liminaire à caractère introductoire, Yves Chevrel retrace à grands traits le panorama de la production littéraire autour de 1830, montrant que les traductions sont loin d’être absentes, même si dans l’histoire littéraire française elles n’y apparaissent d’ordinaire que rarement. Il explique ainsi le fait :

[l]es travaux sur l’histoire de la littérature française sont [...] tributaires d’un choix méthodologique persistant qui [leur fait mettre] l’accent sur les créations et, de ce fait, négliger la réalité des offres de lecture ou de représentation théâtrale. (p. 11)

Cependant, Y. Chevrel insiste, à juste titre, sur le fait que l’histoire du livre actuelle, et, entre autres, l’étude bibliométrique très documentée de Martyn Lyons (Lyons 1987), fournit un tableau éloquent des lectures des Français (et de celles qui sont traduites de l’anglais, en particulier). Il montre aussi la lente, mais incessante pénétration des littératures étrangères en France : les Français sont loin de ne lire alors que des créations françaises, comme la presse de l’époque permet de le constater. L’année 1830, prise comme référence centrale de l’ensemble des études, est évidemment explicable d’un simple point de vue historique, mais, comme l’indique l’auteur de l’introduction du volume, elle marque le début du « changement des mentalités qui est en train de s’opérer en France à l’égard des œuvres traduites » (p. 19). Ainsi est justifiée dans l’étude traductologique cette référence à l’année 1830, qui voit : « de nouvelles impulsions, de nouvelles questions, suscitées par un appel de l’étranger, de plus en plus entendu – et rendu plus accessible par les traductions » (p. 20).

Dans l’étude intitulée « Traductions de textes étrangers dans les périodiques français en 1830 » (p. 21-34), Patrick Berthier s’intéressera aux périodiques français dont Chevrel avait montré, quelques pages plus haut, l’importance croissante. La littérature n’est pas le genre le mieux représenté dans ces traductions. La manière de traduire des journalistes est aussi examinée, et l’auteur souligne la fréquence de l’attitude qu’il qualifie (de façon euphémistique) d’« interventionniste ». Ainsi, par exemple, *Le correspondant* (mars 1831) offre à ses lecteurs une lettre à propos de laquelle il n’hésite pas à préciser :

Nous donnons [transcrivons pour les lecteurs du journal] la lettre telle qu’elle est dans l’original, seulement comme elle est fort longue,