

Phelan, Mary; Rudvin, Mette; Skaaden, Hanne and Kermit, Patrick. 2020. ETHICS IN PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETING. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

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Since our childhood, telling right from wrong has been a tricky puzzle our parents make us work out on our own. As we evolve, the puzzle seems to be more complex, without any straightforward answer. Indeed, ethics matter not only in our everyday life but also in our professional development. However, little has been known about ethics in the context of public service interpreting. The edited volume under review bridges the existing gap in knowledge and enriches our understanding of the multifacetedness of ethics in various public service scenarios. With an overarching aim to cultivate ethically aware public service interpreters, the pioneering book is intended for present and future practitioners, scholars, researchers, linguists, and anyone who is interested to find out more about practical solutions to real-life ethical dilemmas.

The informative book has a clear three-part structure, the first contextualising the intellectual inquiries by navigating through core concepts and theoretical approaches, the second elucidating codes of ethics by making connections to real-life ethical problems, and the third linking theory bases to ethically-minded professional development by highlighting the importance of trust-building in the professional relationship.

Theoretically, Part 1 of the book has successfully grounded the historical, philosophical, and professional aspects of public service interpreting in the nourishing soil of moral ethics. By making the link between four macro-areas of moral philosophy, virtue and 'the Good', duty and responsibility, consequence of actions and utility, and justice and equality (Graham 2011) and four macro-areas of translators' social and ethical responsibilities, representation, service, communication, and norm-based (Chesterman 2001), the contributor to this part honours the notion of loyalty, honesty, and truth-telling as foundations of accuracy ethics for public service interpreters from a human relationship perspective. The part also sheds light on the culture-specific nature of the understanding of ethics by making links between Western philosophy, represented by Greek, Italian, French, German, Scandinavian, and British traditions and Eastern philosophy, represented by China and India in time and space (34).

Professionally, revolving around the interpreter agency and their role expectations in public service scenarios, Part 2 reviews existing codes of ethics in institutional, medical, and corporate settings across a wide range of geographical locations by comparing all relevant professional

associations and codes in action (88-91), supported by further evidence from the Norwegian example. Noteworthy, the contributor to this part has critiqued the actual operability given the institutional, cross-cultural, sociological-, ideological, and budget and resources constraints (109).

Pedagogically, built on the interconnectedness of practice, research, and education in public service interpreting, Part 3 provides an in-depth analysis of factors that impact the quality of public service interpreting (191) and inspires educators, trainers, and instructors to critically reflect on a number of crucial issues related to professional integrity through the lens of interpreter's positionality and inter-relational trust-building between the service provider and the service user. Mutual purpose and shared understanding of the profession of public service interpreting and reasonable role expectations of interpreters would thus contribute to a fruitful collaboration serving the public good.

With a Nordic focus, one sure strength of this explanatory book is its inclusive approach by unveiling the lesser-known professional history and development of Norwegian Sign Language interpreters in the pre-professional era under the frame of ethical principles in public service interpreting. These accuracy-related principles include (1) ensuring the quality of the source-text/target-text relationship by preserving inner-oriented textual norms through telos and skopos, (2) fulfilling the contractual obligations with clients and duty to speakers and listeners by exerting duty of care and exercising due diligence when it clients' ultimate good, and (3) honouring the duty to society by upholding societal norms through impartiality and confidentiality, supported by a series of practical measures to control any non-maleficence damages (80-81). Another merit of this comprehensive book is its emphasis on the social responsibilities of ethical interpreters as agents of social change. By enhancing the professional esteem of interpreters as people and community service professionals, the edited volume thus makes a case for increased recognition of interpreters in the public service sector as an indispensable part of social justice.

On a personal note, echoing concerns shared by many scholars (Wadensjö 2004), I find the issues discussed in the book very relatable to my pre-research work as a staff interpreter serving organisational and institutional interests. Thanks to the progress in certification, professionalisation, and interprofessional education, our interpreters nowadays become highly trained specialised experts who have spent more time, energy, finances, and resources to earn the qualifications required by the public and private sectors. Plus, our interpreters serve not only professional interests but also social responsibilities for the public good. Apart from formal education and continuous professional development training, our interpreters dedicate conscious endeavours to self-education and lifelong learning to stay relevant in our technology-empowered world.

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Our interpreters' efforts should be acknowledged in order to strengthen intra-professional solidarity and benefit interprofessional collaboration for a more equitable world that cares for and supports vulnerable and socio-economically underprivileged groups to advance and thrive in infinite possibilities this once-and-only lifetime could offer. Therefore, the concerted voices of all contributors to the book compass us towards a more ethically conscious professional world in which people and community services professionals can make authentic choices with balanced views between empathy and rationality.

With these being discussed, this book is a useful reference for educators, learners, present and future professionals, other people and community service professionals, policymakers, rights advocates, community changemakers, and people who work with interpreters in academic and professional realms.

References:

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