

In and Out of the Pandemic: COVID-19 Aftermath in the World of Translation and Interpreting (and Beyond)

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Over two years since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world of translation and interpreting has been tested, challenged and re-projected possibly in all of its facets. Similar to other sectors, the translation and interpreting market has been facing the question of how fundamental the changes in the aftermath of the pandemic will be, whilst translators and interpreters across the globe have been adapting to new working contexts and situations. Going remote has revealed its pros and cons – work-wise, training-wise, but also socially. As with nearly every other crisis, the pandemic has highlighted the crucial role of translation and interpreting services in the public-service sector, during acute crisis situations, as well as in providing general information to all, inviting translation and interpreting professionals and volunteers to step in and help when needed. The training of future professionals has been tested across the globe, often resorting to emergency remote training (Breton 2020), trying to react to changed training and social conditions (Wu – Wei 2021, Perez – Hodáková 2021), and abruptly changing the translation and interpreting profession.

The presented issue of *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting* aims to address the current challenges posed to the world of translation and interpreting by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. The presented approaches look at translation and interpreting in crisis communication in both professional and voluntary settings, observe translator and interpreter training in changed educational settings, provide guidance and experience in remote training strategies, and offer pivotal insights into the question of the mental health and well-being of students during times of remote training and social distancing.

As in any other crisis affecting humans locally and globally, prompt and effective communication becomes essential (O'Brien – Federici 2019, Resurreccio 2020). In their paper entitled Translation during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nepal: Performance without Recognition, Bal Ram Adhikari and Sagun Shrestha focus on the role of translation in communicating risk information. Using the example of Nepal, they point out the potential of incorporating translation into crisis communication and management. The findings of their case study reveal that, although still unacknowledged, crisis translation plays a crucial role in delivering information in the Nepali

language, as well as in the wider world, where crisis policies rely mainly on (re)production of crisis documents in a lingua franca.

Views on the experience of tackling the initial problems and uncertainty in sustaining effective university training of to-be interpreters are presented in papers by Csilla Szabó, Rita Besznyák and Maria Bakti. Surveying the trainers and trainees at BME's Centre for Interpreter and Translator Training, Szabó and Besznyák interpret the obtained perspectives on online interpreting courses in four major interpreting modes: sight translation, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and liaison interpreting. They reveal several impacts caused by the changes imposed on training by the pandemic, which could be viewed as positive. The results of their research demonstrate the links between the changing market situation and the ways universities reacted to the new training conditions, pointing out the training and pragmatic potential of remote interpreting. Bakti presents the results of her survey of students' perspectives collected from attendants of seminars on interpreting techniques and consecutive interpreting at the University of Szeged. Besides researching the effects of online training, a special focus is on the amount of stress faced by students during online classes.

Stress is at the centre of attention in the study provided by Soňa Hodáková, who looks at the stress levels, mental health and well-being of students in and beyond the classroom. Conducting qualitative and quantitative analysis of factors in remote training that affect the course of education, its outcomes, and also students' lives, she emphasizes the importance of developing the personal and interpersonal competences of trainees, which can also serve as a tool for improving the well-being of to-be translators and interpreters.

The last paper in this issue introduces a methodology for preparatory exercises suitable for interpreting seminars conducted remotely. Andrej Zahorák presents a model of teaching and training leading to consolidation of receptive and productive skills, which was tested and evaluated by the translation and interpreting trainees of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Although the suggested exercises are designed to interpreting students with a Russian and Slovak combination, it can be easily modified to other language combinations and used either as a supplementary tool during remote training, as well as a tool for students in traditional settings interested in individual preparatory practice.

The collection of papers presented in this issue complements the emerging bibliography reflecting the contemporary development in the translation and interpreting profession and training influenced by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a bibliography is of significant importance – identifying the topical issues, providing guidance and expertise, and helping respond to current challenges. Moreover, it encourages and stimulates approaches focusing on previously overlooked or underestimated aspects of translation and interpreting, as well as innovative points of view and strategies in translator and interpreter

training. These might be of great potential for contexts other than the current pandemic.

References:

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