
The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Pragmatics is the first book that provides a thorough review of a pragmatic approach to Translation and Interpreting Studies. This volume links together different disciplinary traditions and perspectives introducing the main theoretical issues and important concepts, showing applications of pragmatics in translation and interpreting and suggesting future developments in pragmatics-driven translation research. The handbook offers theoretical statements and methodological suggestions representing a reference work on pragmatics and translation that will be beneficial for students, novice and experts scholars in translation and interpreting, as well as in related fields of linguistics, communication and intercultural studies.

The book is structured around three main parts (Influences and Intersections, Methodological Issues and Applications), with the last part containing the most contributions (up to 300 pages). As a whole, the volume brings together 22 chapters by individual authors, which can be read and comprehended stand-alone. Some chapters present critical examination of the related theoretical works, their application for translation and interpreting, some chapters address methodological issues, and others showcase their own new (or revisited) findings in the analysis of translation in various contexts, such as news, science, literature, audiovisual settings, online social media, healthcare, as well as audio description for the theatre. In the following, the three parts of the book are reviewed in more details.

The handbook starts with an essential introductory section which presents the main issues of pragmatics and translation and interpreting studies, describes interaction between them and notably, the impact of pragmatics onto translation, pointing to the central concepts of context and contextualisation that influence the development of a pragmatically oriented theory of translation. Last but not less important, this section also points to the existing empirical methods, such as corpus-based approaches, but also mentions pragmatics-inspired approaches to the study of interpreting and multi-modality.

Part I (Influences and Intersections) contains an introduction to main concepts and theoretical frameworks within pragmatics. The philosophical framework is offered in the first chapter (Chapter 1, Bruti) which is about speech acts and translation. The author relates pragmatic issues of translation with speech acts and illocutionary functions and emphasizes that speech act theory (a philosophical reflection on language) provides an effective analytic framework that...
helps recognising and describing language functions. Chapter 2 (Mapson) provides a social framework by exploring im/politeness as a facet of pragmatics. Importantly, the author points to limitations of many translation and interpreting studies on im/politeness for being restricted to theoretical frameworks and a focus on the pragmalinguistic form of utterances. Chapter 3 (Gallai) offers an overview of the cognitive approaches to communication taken by Relevance Theory. The author succeeded in illustrating the explanatory potential of Relevance Theory and pointing out the necessity of a balance between description and explanation by exploring the nature of what is processed and the way mental models are negotiated in real data sets. As Relevance Theory components have a correlation with Information Theory (Shannon, 1948), studies on translation process and product that try to probabilistically model translation (Schaeffer et al., 2016; Martinez-Martinez & Teich, 2017) could also have been mentioned here.

Part II (Methodological Issues) is dedicated to important methodological questions including both corpus-based and experimental approaches. In the first chapter (Chapter 4, Meyer), the author shows examples of pragmatic phenomena in interpreting studied on the basis of systematically collected data and outlines the problems and advantages of corpus-based research on interpreting. While the author is right that transcription, annotation and audio or video alignment pose methodological challenges, it should be pointed out that technological advances enable more corpus-based and corpus-driven analyses in this area, so that communicative events can be modelled with statistical methods (see e.g. He He et al. 2016). At the same time, there is a need for linking qualitative studies in pragmatics to quantitative approaches, e.g. those existing for automatic emotion and sentiment detection in translation (see e.g. Troiano et al. 2020 and Lohar et al. 2017), which are not mentioned in the chapter. Chapter 5 (Desilla) attempts to describe challenges of audience research from an experimental pragmatics perspective in the multimodal context of subtitled films. The author tries to operationalise and to measure utterance comprehension using questionnaires as data elicitation method and a scale for measuring utterance comprehension. This work is inspiring for researchers in the pragmatics of audiovisual translation (AVT). Moreover, this work will encourage other researchers to use additional methods from experimental psychology. Importantly, the author points out that Pragmatics and Psycholinguistic represent different perspectives and that their combination is desired for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. The last chapter (Chapter 6, Kranich) addresses contrastive approaches to pragmatics and translation suggesting the main differences between contrastive pragmatics and contrastive analysis in general. The chapter also addresses the existing
corpus data issues, describing the corpus CroCo (Hansen-Schirra et al. 2012). Although this corpus is unique in its thorough design, the author could have mentioned other bidirectional corpora, such as Europarl and further corpora available through the OPUS platform (Tiedemann, 2012). From a methodological point of view, the author compares semasiological and onomasiological approaches, emphasizing the necessity of combining these two for a better account of linguistics phenomena. This meaningful comparison could have been related to the distinction between a more comprehensive account of a linguistic phenomenon (numerous language patterns are used as operationalisations) from a case-study-based account (with one specific pattern thoroughly analysed) in a corpus-linguistic perspective.

Part III (Applications) is the biggest part of the book and includes sound illustrations of pragmatic studies on translation and interpreting involving different modes and settings. As these studies deal with various thematic areas, the part is subdivided into five thematic sections.

It starts with a section on politics and persuasion, where meaningful facets of news translation in written and sign language modes are investigated. The first contribution (Chapter 7, Chovanec) to this section consider the ideological implications of (mis)translation in news production. The chapter shows that news translation is accompanied by frequent strategies of textual transformation. Interestingly, the author is convinced that research into news translation needs to take into account a combined product- and process-approach. The second contribution (Chapter 8, Stone) considers British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting via a Relevance Theory lens, which seems to be helpful in understanding the decisions that the BSL interpreters make. The third chapter (Chapter 9, Valdés) considers the impact of the multimodal nature of advertisements on the interpretive use of translation. The author reviews the multimodal nature of advertisements in terms of reception studies, Relevance Theory and speech acts. Importantly, the author points to the need for further research and also training in this area.

The second section is on translation, pragmatics and the creative arts. It notably shows several pragmatics-inspired translation studies in fiction, poetry, theatre and film. The focus of the first chapter (Chapter 10, Morini) is on the fundamental understanding of what actually happens in the passage from source to target text. The authors analyses the presupposed relationship between writer/translator and reader, providing the analytical possibilities of politeness and implicature theory for translator scholars and translators in relation to the translation of literary fiction. The second chapter (Chapter 11, De Pablos-Ortega) systematises the linguistic representation of the speech act
of directives in AVT. Notably, it combines a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the patterns used in the original film script and its translation, i.e. linguistic forms, politeness formulae or components to express (in)directness when performing speech acts. Their significant insight is that the analysed subtitles are closer to the source text leading to high fidelity in the translation of directive speech.

The third section (Knowledge Transfer and Knowledge Creation) collects works on scientific and technical translation. The section chapters focus on the important relationship between translator and commissioner in the creation of the translation brief. The first chapter (Chapter 14, Sidiropoulou) analyses the vagueness-specificity relation in English–Greek academic translation with a focus on in/definiteness, logical discourse connection, spatio-temporal deixis and lexical manifestations using parallel and comparable data, as well as a questionnaire. The third chapter in this subsection (Chapter 15, Scarpa) focuses on the communicative features shared by sci-tech texts and the challenges these pose for achieving pragmatic equivalence. Worthy of note, the author addresses both external situational and internal cognitive factors in the discussion of what is needed to achieve a pragmatically successful translation. Overall, pragmatic notions are considered in relevance to decision-making in everyday translation practice. In the final chapter of this subsection (Chapter 16, Kvam), the role of the translation dialogue in creating translation discourse material and shaping the translation brief is analysed. Translation discourse material is presented with special emphasis on translation dialogue – the dialogue between the translator and the commissioner with the purpose of elaborating the details of the translation brief.

In the fourth section (Agency, Intervention and Pragmatic Competence), contributions on spoken language dialogue interpreting are collected. The first chapter of this subsection (Chapter 17, Baraldi) shows the ways in which interpreters’ utterances are relevant in healthcare interactions involving healthcare professionals and patients and how recipients handle their contextual effects. Remarkably, the author uses a combination of approaches – pragmatics, sociological theory and interpreting studies – for their analysis. In the next chapter (Chapter 18, Vargas-Urpi), the author investigates issues of politeness and interpersonal relationships in educational setting. For this, politeness theory is applied to the analysis of interpreters’ renditions in educational settings. The chapter focuses on public service interpreting (PSI). Unfortunately, the author does not provide a definition of PSI, as well as its delimitation from community interpreting (both terms are often interchangeable but still differ), which would be an asset here. The development of pragmatic competence in
translator and interpreter training through experiential learning is illustrated in the last chapter of this section (Chapter 19, Crezee & Burn). The benefits of pedagogies involving situated learning and reflective blogs were tested in multilingual interpreting and translation classrooms.

The final section of the book (Dis-embodied Communication and Technology) examines crucial intersections between translation studies and new contexts and practices of translation. The first chapter (Chapter 20, Desjardins) shows connections between translation, pragmatics and social media. Noteworthy, it discusses the ways in which pragmatics can inform the study of translation of social media. The author introduces key terms and provides a literature review that combines these disciplinary perspectives, as well as an overview of online social media and its relevance for translation and pragmatic research and education/training. In the next chapter (Chapter 21, Balogh & Salaets), the role of non-verbal elements, such as posture, gesture, facial expression, gaze and note-taking, in legal interpreting is analysed within a study of a cross-border interpreter-mediated video-conference witness hearing. The study also evaluates the relationship between the non-verbal elements and the verbal elements the authors analysed in their previous work. The last chapter (Chapter 22, Fryer) focuses on the analysis of pragmatic competence of the target audience in the area of audio description. The study confirms that pragmatics offers a theoretical approach to choices in audio description. Moreover, it also shows that audio description is an important mode of audio-visual translation for the future exploration of pragmatics.

Overall, the book is well-written and well-edited. The only drawback of the book could be the balance between the parts and their composition – whereas the first two parts can be read as parts of one reference work, the last part is rather read as an edited volume, as it contains a collection of studies merged by the pragmatic aspects that are central in the analyses. This results in a repetition of key concepts and theoretical frameworks, which are, however, adjusted to the studies presented. At the same time, this could also be considered as an advantage – these chapters may serve as an illustration of how to use the same concepts in different applications.

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