

Mira Kadrić, Mira; Rennert, Sylvi; y Schäffner, Christina (Eds.), *Diplomatic & Political Interpreting Explained.* Oxford /New York: Routledge 2022. 204 pp.

Ran Yi <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/estr.88558>

In diplomacy and statecraft studies, it has been established that the invisible, yet omnipresent, language interpreters often assume a critical role at international meetings of politicians and diplomats. In contrast to interpreting in everyday settings, interpreting in political and diplomatic settings is high-profile and exclusive for two main reasons. On the one hand, political events and diplomatic missions often involve high-ranking and high-power officials from the field of politics and diplomacy, usually heads of the state, ministers, and military commanders. On the other hand, the impact of these communicative events is far-reaching, extending to peace negotiations, conflict resolutions, and post-conflict peace-building efforts. The outcome of these operations is highly visible and substantive to vulnerable groups and mobile populations, including but not limited to child victims, war-afflicted adults, and displaced and stateless populations.

However, the role of interpreters in these high-stake political and diplomatic events has been under-explored. These are only a few previous studies that ponder the role of diplomatic interpreters. For example, Torikai (2009) resorted to an auto-ethnographic approach and studied the life and the lived experiences of five diplomatic interpreters in post-World War II Japan. However, little has been known about the diplomats' and politicians' expectations. This book broadens our understanding of the intricacy of interlingual transfer in highly complex diplomatic and political settings by engaging an integrative approach to elicit multi-stakeholder perspectives.

The book is originally adapted from a Germanic manual on interpreting in politics and diplomacy (Kadrić & Zanocco 2018). Grounded in the intersection of diplomacy, politics, and law, the book focuses on interpreting official high-level bilateral meetings and multilateral diplomatic negotiations between representatives of several countries. Both the content and the expressive dimension of interpreted political and diplomatic communicative interaction are addressed in a systematic way.

The book consists of seven chapters. Starting with an introduction of key concepts, Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of challenges, opportunities, responsibilities, and requirements for diplomacy in the development of international law and international organisations. Centring around the political, diplomatic, and institutional contexts of communication and language interpreting activities, Chapter 2 delves into the relevance and alignment of interpreters in high-stake diplomatic communication scenarios. Then in Chapter 3, the complex issue of precision, meaning, and accuracy in political settings is dissected in accordance with interpreters' language choices and comprehension of different purposes in political speeches. Chapter 4 explores the nuanced role of expectations, norms, and exceptions in managing complex and meticulous information in diplomatic settings and provides ways to manage information and reproduce the discourses into acceptable equivalences in the target language. Chapter 5 examines the ways to mediate emotions and style embedded in expressive interactions by shedding light on the limits of renditions constrained by situational and institutional factors. Then Chapter 6 examines the situatedness of the interpreting practice and elaborates on the skills, ethics, and responsibilities of interpreters in diplomatic missions. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the book with a thorough discussion of strategies and developments for interpreters in political and diplomatic settings.

There has been a robust body of interdisciplinary literature on the significance of interpreters in various scenarios (Yi 2023a, 2023b, 2024a, 2024b). The important role of interpreters in court, diplomatic, and political settings has been widely recognised. The book takes us on a reflective tour with interpreters, diplomats, politicians, and experts in interpreting and discourse analysis. By delving into the history of diplomacy and interpreters in diplomatic and political settings and interviews with interpreters, diplomats and politicians, the book considers language as a tool of diplomatic and political communication and evaluates the role of interpreters in different forms of diplomatic interaction. Its multidisciplinary, integrative, and systematic approach to multilayered understandings of role expectations of interpreters in politics and international relations, supported by real-life examples of diplomatic or political events and simulated exercises that fit for group work and self-study, is applaudable. Therefore, the book is recommended as a useful reference for

international stakeholders, researchers, scholars, and students in international law, international relations, politics, and translation and interpreting studies.

References

- Kadrić, Mira & Zanocco, Giulia (2018). *Dolmetschen in Politik und Diplomatie [Interpreting in politics and diplomacy]* (Basiswissen Translation). Facultas.
- Torikai, Kumiko (2009). *Voices of the Invisible Presence: Diplomatic Interpreters in Post-World War II Japan*. John Benjamins.
- Yi, Ran (2023a). The promise of linguistic equity for migrants in Australian courtrooms: a cross-disciplinary perspective. *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, 29(1), 174-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1323238X.2023.2232171>
- Yi, Ran (2023b). Interpreting the Manner of Speech in courts: an overlooked aspect. *Front. Psychol.* 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1209908>
- Yi, Ran (2024a). Manner Matters: Linguistic Equity Through a Court Interpreter in Australia. *Int J Semiot Law. Online First*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-023-10090-3>
- Yi, Ran (2024b). Justice Under Microscope: Analysing Mandarin Chinese Markers in Virtual Courtroom Discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 26(1), 117-135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614456231197045>