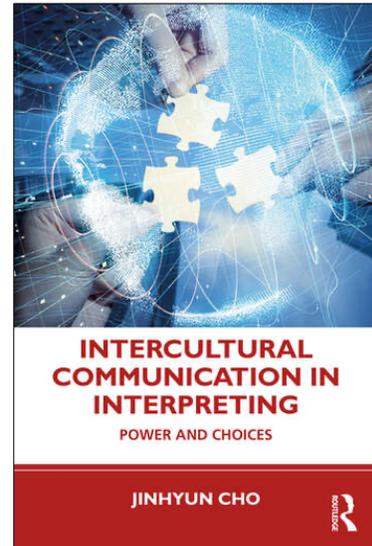


Jinhyun Cho, **Intercultural Communication in Interpreting: Power and Choices**, London, UK: Routledge, 2021, 151 pp., \$42.95 (paperback), \$160.00 (hardcover), \$32.21 (eBook).

Reviewed by
Cuiling Zhang¹
University of Science and Technology Beijing

Intercultural Communication in Interpreting: Power and Choices, by Jinhyun Cho, addresses the issues of intercultural communication in the field of interpreting where the interpreter acts as the medium through which the message is transmitted. Traditionally, the interpreter has been regarded as a mere linguistic conduit, with little power over the communicative events. This conduit model, however, has been increasingly challenged by researchers focusing on the active role of interpreters in communicative encounters (Mason, 2001; Wadensjö, 1998). While power relations in translation have attracted considerable scholarship since the “cultural turn” of the 1990s (Álvarez & Vidal, 1996; Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002), the issue has thus far been examined mainly concerning written texts. This book makes up for this deficiency by examining the power structures embedded in the interpreter-mediated intercultural communications, while offering a new perspective on the power of the interpreter to mediate and influence the communicative process.



Based on a qualitative analysis of 50 semi-structured interviews of professional interpreters working in the business, school, medical care, and legal space in Australia, the book explores the power hierarchy embedded in each field of communication and the barriers it poses for interpreters, with particular focus on the mediating power of the interpreter in the efforts to facilitate effective communication. The book also touches on issues of ethical dilemmas and cultural conflicts between Asian countries and Australia, which makes it a contribution not only to interpreting studies but also to cultural studies and anthropology.

The book is organized into six chapters. Chapters 1 and 6 act respectively as introduction and conclusion, while each of the other four chapters is dedicated to a field of intercultural communication. Chapter 1, “Interpreting Intercultural Communication,” presents the aim of the book: to examine how and why the interpreters make the choices in the intercultural communication that is embedded with power asymmetries. It overviews the characteristics of interpreter-mediated communication in the framework of culture, power, and agency of interpreters. The types and roles of professional interpreters are revisited as background information. Specifically, there are two types of interpreting: community and noncommunity. Community interpreting usually occurs in settings such as schools and healthcare facilities and within immigration and law contexts. Communication in business and diplomatic settings is called noncommunity interpreting, which includes diplomatic (conference) interpreting and business interpreting. This chapter also

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provides a detailed description of the book's research methodology and data collection process, followed by an appendix of the profile of the 50 participants at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2 examines the power hierarchies in the business context and how they influence the choice of interpreters. The author argues that "feminization" of the interpreting profession is most evident in the business world (p. 18), while men still dominate most top-level positions of companies worldwide. Female interpreters in these interactions are thus often faced with communication problems brought about by gender stereotypes and male executives. Masculine jokes, off-topic information, and nonverbal modality for face-saving are three major communicative challenges faced by women interpreters in their business interactions. By highlighting interpreters' choices and strategies, such as omitting the jokes, cutting in, and rephrasing utterances, the author shows the readers how the interpreters should exercise their micropower to facilitate efficient and effective communication outcomes.

Chapter 3 reaches into the complexity of intercultural interactions in the medical field in Australia, focusing on the communication between migrant patients and healthcare doctors. The author looks at three communicative events that present challenges to the interpreters. One concerns elderly migrant patients who live in isolation and loneliness. They depend heavily on interpreters to be "a shoulder to cry on," which is often in conflict with institutional regulations (p. 48). The second is related to immigrants who have mental illness, a disease that is considered a shame in their countries of origin. Since these patients are afraid that interpreters will disclose their conditions, they tend to refuse to talk with interpreters. The third involves delivering bad news to patients, especially when they are diagnosed with a terminal disease. Of all the above conditions, interpreting is not merely a matter of being faithful to language or information but a process of decision making targeted at effective communication. It can help patients to either achieve better health outcomes or remain hopeful about those outcomes.

Chapter 4 focuses on intercultural communication in school settings in Australia, where communicative tensions mainly result from different educational values, aspirations, and dreams between Asian migrant parents and Australians. The most typical difference is that the former have much higher expectations for their children's academic performances. Using anthropological and sociological theories, the author sharply points out that the homogenization and stereotypes of Asian migrants are essentially a response to the structurally imposed social constraints brought about by imbalanced linguistic and racial hierarchies. Since intercultural communication in school settings is less hierarchical than in other contexts (p. 79), the interpreter needs to act as cultural advisor in certain encounters, explicating cultural issues to prevent misunderstandings and maximize communication success.

Chapter 5 investigates interpreter-mediated communications in the legal context of Australia, focusing on the power imbalance in courtrooms and the refugee application process. The Australian courtroom is ripe with deep-seated monoculturalism and monolingualism, resulting in hostility and bias toward other languages and cultures. The interpreters in these encounters are not only ethno-racially biased by their coworkers but also constrained by the codes of professional ethics that require them to produce verbatim renditions of the utterances and thus leave them little capacity to interfere in the communication process. That being said, interpreters are not without agency. They can still help facilitate communication and realize social justice by resorting to such strategies as cutting in, using filters, seeking clarification, and

offering cultural advice. Considering the power imbalance, the author argues that not just interpreters but all the interlocutors involved should resume responsibility in addressing intercultural communication problems in courtrooms. The author proposes a two-pronged approach that involves mutual understanding and cooperation between legal professionals and interpreters.

The sixth and last chapter seeks to answer the two questions asked in chapter 1: Why does intercultural communication often break down in interpreter-mediated interactions, and how do interpreters tackle intercultural communication issues when they arise? To answer the first question, the author, by drawing on small-culture approaches, points out that the power imbalance between English and other minor cultures is the main reason for the breakdowns of intercultural communication in question. Foregrounding the choices and strategies made by the interpreter, the author concludes by addressing the second question, that interpreters should not be perceived merely as linguistic conduits in the aforementioned communicative encounters. Instead, their agency and roles as active mediators should be highlighted to bring about successful and/or just communicative outcomes.

Overall, this book is a meaningful exploration of interpreter-mediated communication and represents a major contribution to the growing body of research on the interpreter's visibility and role in intercultural communication. The book's central questions, which are highly relevant for translation, interpreting studies, and intercultural communication alike, and its real-life examples make for not only an engaging and enjoyable read but a pragmatic guide for practitioners. The book's exploration of power relations in the various fields of communication is especially insightful, in that it sheds light on how and why intercultural communication breakdowns occur and how interpreters can make up for them in the face of power imbalances and cultural clashes. In addition, the book's nuanced decision-making strategies for the interpreter make it a valuable blueprint of practical skills for anyone who is entering the interpreting profession. The inclusion of the Reflection Activity at the end of each section could certainly provide thought-provoking discussions in college courses in fields like communication, business, education, cross-cultural studies, and interpreting ethics.

There are two possible limitations of the book. First, the narrative is sometimes redundant and sporadic, as in chapter 4, "School Interpreting," in which stories of Asian parents' aspirations and their views on education that are not too pertinent to the book are given too much space. Second, this sporadic narrative, together with the extensive areas it covers, undermines its research depth. With mostly stories and interviews, the book just scratches the surface in its exploration of why certain intercultural communication processes break down, and fails to provide a theoretical framework that considers the various factors in the asymmetrical relations of power, to make the issue more conceptualized and universally relevant.

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