

Book Review

Angelelli, C. V. (2019). *Healthcare interpreting explained*. Routledge. 202 Pages

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Claudia V. Angelelli is a notable scholar in the field of interpreting studies. Her research in medical interpreting is indeed prolific (e.g, Angeleli, 2004; 2006; 2012; 2015). Her most recent book, *Healthcare Interpreting Explained* (2019), provides another perspective on her knowledge in the entwined worlds of medical, healthcare, and language specialists. According to acknowledgements of the book, this publication is the combination of her pioneering works with the *California Partnership* and the *Connecting World Collaborative Testing Project* in 2003 (p.xxi). As a result of her substantial research and classroom resources documented in this book, the reader will have a thorough grasp of the topic of healthcare interpreting services in the current medical-related environments.

The book is designed into eight sections that tackle such issues as the relevant regulations and professional ecology, modes of communication, necessary professional skills, and the interpreter's roles and ethical concerns, respectively. It may be claimed that the structure of the book provides practical application and valuable emphasis on the real-world medical scenario. Each section contains elements such as activities in the classroom, journaling, and assignments. Compared to her earlier publications that lean more towards academic terrain, this book supplies classroom and simulated activities that will direct especially students of interpreting studies towards the practicality of health-related interpreting that involves diverse stakeholders.

The first chapter serves as an overview of how one can pursue a career in interpreting. The author reviews the broader discipline of interpreting studies by outlining the training of various kinds that an interpreter is required to embark on. Throughout the chapter, several practical concepts firmly rooted in interpreting studies are explored in-depth and thoroughly. The chapter describes specialised interpreting in various venues (hospitals, courtrooms, networking conferences) with a variety of topics (politics, medicals, laws).

Two additional parts are included in the second chapter. It begins with the fundamental interpreting systems and players in healthcare settings (e.g., healthcare providers, patients, administrators, family members, friends) and then moves on to explain the regulatory standards and the idea of language rights. This section concentrates mainly on background knowledge of healthcare environments, relationships between professionals and customers, and a country's regulations, all of which are presented primarily from the viewpoints of the Western world (such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, Spain, the United States) which is stated clearly at the beginning of the book (p.xv).

In both Chapters 3 and 4, the practice of healthcare interpreting is described as a communicative process that an interpreter should master. The author explains how the information (content) and function (form) of healthcare encounters might be affected by the stakeholders' objectives and possible socio-cultural characteristics that are present in the actual settings. Both chapters seem to depict the interactions between professionals and customers as a straightforward approach. The author hints at the interpreter's requirements for the use of their judgement in the communicative intents of both speaker and listener. While these requirements must be taken into consideration, the trained interpreter should also keep in mind other socio-cultural elements (such as the operational routine between professionals and customers, the medium of communication, or even special medical treatment like mental health).

The following two chapters offer some interested readers several inspiring yet required sample materials that will benefit them in the improvement of their receptive skills. Furthermore, the author lists a set of practical suggestions that students of interpreting might put into practice in their future employment. Language and cultural competence, active listening, and text analysis are all mentioned as vital for comprehending the meaning of the source speech. She also covers the productive skills necessary for delivering information in a speech, including public speaking, paraphrasing, memorising small details, and taking notes. These two chapters are similarly focused on the value of self-assessment and on practical approaches designed specifically for novice interpreters. For instance, the book includes practice sheets for text selection when trying to improve one's active listening skills (pp.94-95), as well as a sample note-taking task for developing productive skills (pp.128-131).

Together with more current contributions from other experts in the field, Chapter 7 is explicitly drawn from the author's original academic publication in 2004 on the "roles" of interpreters. Various forms of interpreting services that have been established through the Western lens by experienced interpreters are the focal point of this chapter. The author delves

into the intricacies of interpreters' positions (relating to institution and society) but seems to fall short of explaining how other stakeholders in healthcare interactions, particularly those from Asian cultures where family relationships play a significant role in patient-healthcare provider relationships, might contest these roles. The author treats the interpreter's role metaphorically as bridges, detectives, diamond connoisseurs, mine diggers, and voice machines. However, these metaphorical explanations seem to portray the healthcare interpreter as someone who has a set role that is unaffected by external circumstances when dealing with multiple parties from different cultural backgrounds other than Western culture.

The last chapter summarises the general ethical dilemmas and norms applicable to healthcare interpreting practitioners. Meanwhile, a list of potential difficulties for concerned interpreters working on healthcare premises is offered and clarified.

When seen through the lens of the Thai setting, we can appreciate the relevance of this book due to the absence of literature on medical interpreting, much less a professional handbook on healthcare interpreting, in Thailand. This scenario is hardly surprising, given the lack of emphasis on specialised translation and interpreting in its educational system. Regarding the contribution of Angelelli's book, it may be worthwhile to examine how Thai interpreters working in the healthcare industry may make specific use of Chapters 5 and 6 (receptive and productive skills for interpreters).

Recently, the Thai government has attempted to encourage health tourism with the goal of establishing Thailand as a centre for health-related industries. Medical and wellness tourism, which is predicted to grow in popularity, is one of the tourist activities that might create considerable revenue for Thailand's tourism sector. It is consistent with the Thai government's policy on "Strategies for Thailand's development as an international health hub (2017–2026)."

However, while the image of health and medical tourism in Thailand is somewhat positive due to the country's high-quality medical professionals, modern equipment, and relatively low rates for medical services (Liu & Hounnaklang, 2018; Phalitnonkiat et al., 2021), the fundamental entity of the entire business still requires improvement. It is primarily the lack of training for language experts who would collaborate with other medical personnel in this grand national project. To the best of my knowledge, there is not even a single government-supported post-graduate programme that provides a specialised healthcare interpreting course designed to build the practical skills necessary for professional interpreters.

Another concern relating to translating health information for foreigners is the interpreter for migrant workers from Thailand's neighbouring countries. Previous research on

migrant workers demonstrates that government aid to migrant workers remains less effective, including community health volunteers along borders, healthcare insurance coverage, and public relations about the migrants' rights (Sirilak et al., 2013; Tangcharoensathien et al., 2017; Ruankham, 2020). Also, the government has not yet provided a clear, honest policy on the training of interpreting experts for these vulnerable groups.

From the issues mentioned above, there is an urgent need for the relevant stakeholders to address the problem of the inadequate number of healthcare interpreters to support the government's grand project and also help those vulnerable groups of migrants who tend to be neglected by the authorities. Furthermore, in many potential medical centres, Thailand's interpreting services are not yet fully funded by educational institutions for specialised training, especially in public healthcare services. Therefore, Angelelli's book can be a great guide to training and a starting point for educators interested in bringing out the best in the government's policies for the country's economic benefit and campaigning for human linguistic rights for disadvantaged groups to have access to better healthcare treatment.

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