
**JUAN MIGUEL ORTEGA HERRÁEZ. 2011. GRANADA:
INTERPRETAR PARA LA JUSTICIA. COMARES, 333
PAGES. ISBN 978 84 9836 701 0.**

Reviewed by Catherine Way
University of Granada, Spain
cway@ugr.es

An invitation to review *Interpretar para la Justicia* by Juan Miguel Ortega Herráez is neither a chore, nor yet another routine task to be completed. Despite its lengthy 333 pages, the excellent comprehensive Prologue by Anne Martin and its seven chapters and one appendix flow with an ease that allow the reader to follow the topics as they are introduced and explained with absolute clarity, academic rigour and refreshing honesty.

Translation and Interpreting studies have come a long way since the first tentative steps to define our field of studies (Holmes [1972]1988). The last thirty years have seen an exponential growth of publications and research projects in our dynamic field, drawing on many other disciplines in an attempt to discover how translation and interpreting and translators and interpreters really work. Nevertheless, certain areas have lagged behind, at least in Spain, often due to the practical difficulties that empirical research entails.

Whilst Public Services Interpreting or Community Interpreting as it was often first referred to, began to draw attention from researchers in Spain in the early nineties, court interpreting, addressed in this book, is one of the areas that was neglected, often drawing on publications from the English-speaking world such as González *et al.* (1991), Mikkelson (2000) or Hale (2004). *Undoubtedly, the pioneering work by Carmen Valero Garcés and the FITISPos-UAH Research Group: Training and research in public services translation and interpreting* at the University of Alcalá (Spain) has done much to promote this field, as clearly demonstrated with the publication of this first volume of the journal in hand.

The publication of *Interpretar para la Justicia*, a whole volume dedicated to an underresearched field in Spain, reflects the growing interest in an area which has attracted attention as Spanish society has evolved from receiving an influx of mainly tourists to a growing influx of immigrants that require court interpreting services. This interest stems mainly from the researchers and trainers who attempt to face this growing need in Spanish society, whilst the authorities who are responsible for providing such services have been sadly lacking in their initiatives to provide quality interpreting services in the courts, but we will return to this bone of contention later.

The author, Juan Miguel Ortega Herráez, not only presents the results of the research leading to his Ph.D. presented in the Universidad de Granada in 2006 and supervised by Anne Martin, he also skilfully combines his own professional experience as both a freelance and in-house translator/interpreter for the Spanish police, the Ministry of the Interior and the High Court in Madrid. Besides, as a university lecturer in several universities in Madrid and Alicante and as a member of the GRETI Research Group, he provides an all embracing overview of this complex field from all possible angles. Perhaps more importantly, and from a personal point of view having known the author for some fifteen years, his drive and commitment to improving the professional situation of court interpreters is second to none. Not only as one of the cofounders of the Professional Association of Sworn and Court Translators and Interpreters in Spain (*Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes*

Judiciales y Jurados - APTIJ), but currently as its President he constantly strives to bring court interpreting to the position it deserves in order to guarantee the rights of those involved in judicial proceedings. His constant activity in EULITA, with Spanish authorities, and in striving to implement the 2010 EU Directive on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings and the 2012 Directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings in Spain are ample proof of his determination and tenacity in all spheres of his professional life.

Leading the reader gently into the field in hand, the author introduces court interpreting by contextualizing its situation as an independent genre or as a subgenre of Interpreting in the Public Services (IPS). He carefully delimits court interpreting and the names used to describe it in different countries and by different authors in order to situate the reader in a position to comprehend all that follows in the remaining chapters. The second chapter describes both international and Spanish legislation and norms regarding the right to an interpreter in criminal proceedings, highlighting the contradictions to be found concerning the court interpreter's profile, especially with regard to the qualifications or training required. In an attempt to mitigate this lack of a clear profile, the author reviews the professional accreditation mechanisms that exist in other countries and analyses the accreditation of sworn translators and interpreters and how court interpreters are selected in Spain. As a result it becomes clear that the only accreditation system in Spain is clearly insufficient for court interpreting. Once this has been clearly established, we are presented with a detailed review of the different models of court interpreting services provision in Spain. The analysis not only describes, but also highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the existing models, including the increasing tendency to outsource to interpreting services providers with all the problems this entails. To conclude the chapter special attention is paid to the Madrid 11-M bombing trial which not only drew immense public attention due to the atrocity it dealt with, but also put the interpreters in full public view and increased awareness of the need for quality interpreting services amongst the legal professions. The following two chapters are extremely interesting as they firstly describe and analyse the multiple roles that court interpreters have to play (Chapter 5) from both a professional and an academic stand point, including their role as linguistic mediator, cultural mediators, as translators or expert witnesses in linguistic matters. Secondly, Chapter 6 then presents the results of the empirical research which the author performed by sending questionnaires to practising court interpreters in Spain in order to discover the real situation of court interpreters in Spain. This gargantuan task, given the immense difficulties of merely finding contact details for them, provided 83 valid questionnaires from court interpreters in active service. The questionnaire appears as Appendix I and covers the professional situation of the interpreters, how they organise their daily work, training, their professional self-concept and the role of the interpreter, besides general data concerning language combinations, etc. This data offers real, firsthand data which sheds light on what is actually happening in Spanish courts. Furthermore, the data is carefully analysed taking into account not only the interpreters' own perceptions, but also the different conditioning factors that may affect their perception (gender, nationality, ethnic, socioeconomic). This study provides a goldmine of information begging for further research to be performed. Although it is a difficult task to select just a few, we will mention some of the most interesting findings.

The question of training is a constant backdrop to the study. The author compares the results from interpreters with formal training and those who have none when using different strategies (adaptation, explicitation, summarising and omission) when interpreting in court. The results are similar, despite the lack of training. This similarity is reduced, however, when the interpreters describe the type of interpreting used (simultaneous, consecutive, bilateral) in different contexts. The author presents these results and then analyses them, reflecting on the

improvements necessary in interpreter training, and particularly court interpreter training, in Spain. The suggestions made by the interpreters on the ideal content of a training course provide food for thought for continued in-house training.

The results which describe the communicative act in which the interpreters are immersed show how they actively participate, often facilitating communication between the different actors involved by adapting the register used, for example, when they consider that social, cultural or educational asymmetry of the parties may hinder this process. The underlying reasons for this active, committed participation rest on a complex, multitude of possible motivating factors. Thankfully, the author saw fit to include questions about empathy with the actors involved, self-perception or the perception that the members of the legal profession have of the interpreter's role and work. The results here provide clear indications of areas of improvement for trainers and for closer collaboration between the actors providing services in the courtroom in order to obtain optimum benefits for all concerned in the judicial process. Unfortunately, psychophysiological aspects of translator and interpreter competence are often sorely neglected. Future court interpreters need to be aware of the profile they must fit, the working conditions and requirements they must meet, in short, what is expected of them in the courtroom. Sadly, the other actors involved are often unaware of the complexity of court interpreting and are unaware themselves of how to use the interpreter or exactly which services they can provide. Another neglected area is confidence, which is difficult to attain in such improvised conditions.

Finally, Ortega summarises his findings in the conclusions, drawing on theory, practise and the results of his study to provide a crystal clear reflection of court interpreting in Spain. His rigorous analysis, sharp criticism and sincere preoccupation with the current situation provide ample material worthy of much needed attention from trainers, practicing court interpreters and interpreting service users and providers.

This volume appeared in 2011, what has happened since it was published? Has the situation changed drastically in courts around Spain? Earlier we mention the implementation of the EU Directives which directly affect translating and interpreting in criminal proceedings and, more importantly, aim to ensure procedural guarantees for those involved. APTIJ has been extremely active in any initiative to implement the directives, in close collaboration with the academics involved in training and the authorities. Universities in Spain have made considerable changes to their undergraduate and postgraduate courses to meet the needs highlighted in this volume, although there is always room for improvement. True to form, however, and undoubtedly partly, but not wholly, due to the crisis in Spain, the authorities have shown some interest, but the Directives have not been implemented. We can only hope that as things improve measures will be taken to ensure adequate provision of court interpreting services.

It is almost impossible not to feel identified with the subjects and their descriptions of their situation in the courtroom for those of us who have personally experienced the sometimes unbelievable situations the court interpreter faces. Trainers and researchers will find a solid theoretical background and stimulating data for future research and course development. This comprehensive volume is essential reading for anyone interested in practising or researching court interpreting.

References

González, R.D., Vásquez, V.F. and H. Mikkelsen.1991. *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

- Hale, S. 2004. *The Discourse of Court Interpreting: Discourse practices of the law, the witness and the interpreter*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Holmes, J. S. 1988 (1972). The name and nature of translation studies. In *James. S. Holmes, Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 67-80.
- Mikkelsen, H. 2000. *Introduction to Court Interpreting*. Manchester/Northampton: St. Jerome.