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Interpreter education in the International Year of Indigenous Languages

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Editorial

Interpreter education in the International Year of Indigenous Languages

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Welcome to the first issue of Volume 11 of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education*. In this issue we bring you an exciting array of contributions from both signed and spoken language interpreting research from four different continents. It is gratifying to see an increased number of submissions to the journal, the breadth and quality of which is helping to develop the journal as a vehicle for interpreter educators globally to share experiences and best practice. Through this, we collectively gain a deeper understanding of interpreting pedagogy in a diverse world.

Before introducing the articles in this issue, we would like to start by reflecting on 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages and on what that means for all of us involved in interpreter education. The increased flow of people around the world means societies are more diverse than ever in terms of their cultural and linguistic make-up. It may well be that the growing recognition of superdiverse societies has also helped encourage the revitalization and maintenance of indigenous languages (Fishman & García, 2010; Fishman, 2001). A greater interest in interpreting and translation from and into indigenous languages may mean there is increasing awareness of the rights of speakers of indigenous languages to express themselves in their mother tongue, through interpreters where necessary, rather than having to communicate in a second language (cf. Whalen, Moss, & Baldwin, 2016). This works to enrich the language and culture of society as a whole, for example with the translation of important cultural expressions such as the *waiata/mele* (songs) of Aotearoa New Zealand and Hawaii (Christophe, 2016) providing insights into the cultural heritage of indigenous communities to a wider global audience.

We are fortunate here in New Zealand that both NZ Sign Language and Te Reo Māori (the indigenous Māori language of NZ) are official languages. The annual conference of the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters was held in Christchurch, New Zealand in early June, and was an official UNESCO event for the United Nations' International Year of Indigenous Languages. The conference started with an official *karakia* (prayer) and a keynote address by Ngahiwi Apanui, Chief Executive of Te Taura Whiri o te Reo Māori, the Māori Language Commission. Several of the presenters spoke about translating literary and other texts into indigenous languages, and issues concerning the alignment of translations within the existing cultural and historical contexts of those languages. Australian interpreter educator Magdalena Rowan gave an interesting presentation about

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providing non-language specific training for interpreters in new and emerging languages, including indigenous languages, using innovative online technology. Non-language specific training (or the 'language neutral' classroom) is certainly gaining traction around the world, but there is a lot for educators in these contexts to consider, especially when educators themselves do not speak the indigenous or minority language. How do we frame our teaching in a culturally appropriate way? How do we teach in a highly multicultural and multilingual classroom? How can we best keep an open mind to learning and developing our own teaching as we go?

John Jamieson, a linguist who works with a number of different languages, gave the audience at the conference an insight into the connected nature of Te Reo Māori grammar and how this challenges what he called the disconnected world view that is evident in English as "an I-language". The overriding message that came out from his presentation was that we all need to be aware of how much our worldview is shaped by the language we grow up using, and how much we could learn from being challenged to look at the world differently (see, for example, Walsh & DeJoseph, 2003). As interpreter educators and researchers, it is thus our responsibility to be ever wary of the 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 2008), and to be open to worldviews that differ from our own or from the dominant view/s in society. When we are open minded to expanding our worldviews in the interpreting classroom, we can learn as much from our students as they do from us, and we can make our classrooms a more welcoming and safe place to practice interpreting.

This issue of *IJIE* also includes content on indigenous interpreter education and concludes with an interview with educators involved in a project aimed at teaching indigenous interpreters to interpret at the Navidad Medical Center in Salinas, California (by Cynthia Roat, Katharine Allen, Marjory Bancroft, and Angélica Isidro). Victor Sosa, the Co-founder of Indigenous Interpreting+®, a national indigenous language interpreting service, was the driving force behind developing The Indigenous Interpreter training program. The interviewees point out that traditional training approaches are often inappropriate for people raised in indigenous cultures. The trainers also report on their in-depth preparatory work, which included extensive consultation with the indigenous communities. The interview contains a link to the training manual which Katharine Allen and Marjory Bancroft compiled in close collaboration with Victor Sosa and Angélica Isidro, participants in the program, and the communities they represent. Readers can download the manual at no cost from this link.

Our research article section includes international contributions from both spoken and signed language interpreter education research. Weiwei Zhang and Zhongwei Song used data from interpreting contests in China to study the effect of self-repair on the judged quality of interpreting and discuss implications for the teaching of consecutive interpreting techniques. In the United States, Barbara Garrett and Emily Girardin studied the American Sign Language expressive competence of applicants wanting to gain entry into a four-year ASL English interpreting major. Their research addresses the valuable debate about the program length and curriculum required to produce competent interpreting graduates. Campbell McDermid, James Pope and Michael Conrad report on a study which aimed to investigate the efficacy of teaching English to ASL translation skills through an online delivery format. They conducted a mixed method evaluation of participants' translation work and evaluated participants' responses to the online lessons.

The commentary section of this issue of *IJIE* comprises a book review by Laura Maddux of the book *Here or There: Research on Interpreting Via Video Link* edited by Jemina Napier, Robert Skinner and Sabine Braun, and contains a variety of international contributions from research in this growing interpreting field.

The Open Forum comprises two interviews, the first of which was conducted by Hong Kong-based interpreter educator Ester S. M. Leung. Ester interviewed Nicole Lan Wei about preparing speakers of languages of limited diffusion for their role as medical interpreters in the Hong Kong healthcare system. The second interview is on the indigenous interpreter training program we mentioned earlier. The dissertation section provides a brief summary of new graduate research undertaken by Janis Cole (Gallaudet University, USA) "Storied Realities: An Examination of the Lived Experiences of Deaf Translators", Nicole Wei Lan (Hong Kong Baptist University) "Crossing the Chasm: Embodied Empathy in Medical Interpreter Assessment", and Rosie Henley (Victoria University of Wellington, NZ) "Sharing the Chairing? A case study investigating practices and impacts of sign language interpretation in meetings with deaf and hearing chairpersons".

The majority of contributions in this issue of *IJIE* show once again that our work as educators often involves identifying barriers faced by a specific group of learners and incorporating this knowledge when we plan our curricula. It also involves consulting and collaborating with members of the communities our graduates will interpret for. We hope that this journal will continue to be a platform which allows interpreting educators and researchers to expand our 'gaze' by sharing our experiences from around the world. Please do keep sending in

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your manuscripts to IJIE: we very much welcome new research articles, ideas for commentary pieces (for example on teaching or interpreting practice issues), as well as interviews. Also please remind your graduate students that the journal has a 'Student Work' section that is an ideal publishing stepping stone for new researchers.

And finally, returning to the theme of the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages, we would like to conclude this editorial with a Māori proverb which deeply resonates with all of us interpreters, interpreter educators and researchers.

He aha te mea nui o te ao?
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata
What is the most important thing in the world?
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

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