

Huang, L., & Yin, Y. (2025). [Review of Book: *The Routledge handbook of interpreting, technology and AI* by E. Davitti, T. Korybski & S. Braun]. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 13. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.51287/cttlebr3>

Book Review

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The interpreting profession underwent a critical transformation, one that saw the rapid adoption of distance technologies and a reconfiguration of established workflows due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As physical gatherings became untenable, practitioners across domains—from healthcare to international diplomacy—pivoted to remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI), video-mediated interpreting (VMI), and telephone interpreting (TI) as essential modes of communication. Arriving as a timely and comprehensive intervention, *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting, Technology and AI* (Davitti, Korybski, & Braun, 2025) is firmly situated within this post-pandemic context. It offers a critical framework for understanding the indelible impact of the pandemic on the evolving symbiosis between interpreters and technology.

The introduction artfully outlines the volume's objectives and structure, emphasizing the transformative force of digital and AI technologies. The editors compellingly argue for ethical, inclusive, and context-sensitive applications, and call for robust pedagogical and institutional responses to prepare interpreters for emerging digital ecosystems.

Part I delves into the technologies integral to modern interpreting, with a pronounced focus on remote modalities. The first three chapters, authored by Gutiérrez, Braun, and the team of Chmiel and Spinolo, respectively, chart the rise of RSI, VMI and TI, driven by both innovation and the exigencies of the pandemic. While these tools have enhanced accessibility, they present persistent challenges such as diminished output quality, increased cognitive load, and user dissatisfaction. All three authors affirm the enduring importance of human interpreters in contexts requiring nuance and call for sustained professional training, digital literacy, and interpreter–AI collaboration. The section continues with Warnicke's critical overview of Video Relay Service (VRS), a vital bimodal interpreting service that facilitates communication for

deaf individuals. Warnicke persuasively suggests that “the future of interaction within VRS depends on ongoing development and further advancements” (p. 76). In Chapter 5, Korybski offers a critical examination of portable interpreting equipment, assessing its practical applications and pedagogical suitability. Subsequently, Ünlü’s chapter explores the burgeoning role of technology in consecutive interpreting (CI), from hybrid modes to digital pens and automatic speech recognition (ASR) tools. The final chapter of this part, by Saina, scrutinizes the increasing use of tablets in professional and educational settings. She emphasizes the urgent need for research into their cognitive and ethical ramifications “to ensure proper and favorable integration of tablets into interpreting practices” (p. 117).

Part II pivots to pedagogical applications. Prandi’s chapter reviews four generations of CAI tool development, classifying research as either interpreter- or system-centric. She stresses the importance of CAI training and anticipates future innovations, calling for continued research into the evolving interpreter-technology dynamic. Orlando then explores the use of digital pens in training, concluding that while they hold pedagogical value, their relevance may wane with newer technologies, thus requiring educators to remain current and keep “a thorough focus on ongoing technological developments and changes” (p. 153). The part concludes with a chapter by Amato et al. on technology in conference interpreter training. It charts the evolution of CAIT tools like IVY, EVIVA, InterpreBank, and Interpreter’s Help, and highlights the positive reception of modern peer-practice platforms like InTrain and ReBooth.

In Part III, two chapters explore semi-automated workflows. Davitti examines hybrid speech-to-text (STT) services that blend interpreting, translation, and accessibility, positioning them as a key frontier in AI-driven practice and “transforming the professional landscape” (p. 182). Fantinuoli then traces the evolution of machine interpreting (MI), contrasting the cascading model with the more prosody-preserving end-to-end model.

Part IV grounds the discussion in professional contexts, including conference, healthcare, legal, and migration settings. Seeber opens with a historical analysis of conference interpreting, advocating for an evidence-based integration of new

technologies that respects legacy practices and ergonomics. Esther de Boe's chapter on healthcare interpreting reviews TI and VMI, noting TI's cost-driven dominance despite VMI's richer communicative potential. Devaux follows with an examination of technology in legal settings, stressing the need for updated ethics and training to "adapt to new technology-led modalities" (p. 275) as well as to ensure technology upholds fairness. The final chapter, by Singureanu and Braun, investigates interpreting in asylum contexts, highlighting the reliance on volunteer platforms and calling for "training for interpreters and users" (p. 297) and a "structured feedback mechanisms" (p. 297).

The handbook's final section, Part V, tackles pressing contemporary issues. It opens with a chapter by Davitti et al. on redefining quality in the technological era. The authors review various evaluation methods and advocate for a hybrid model that combines human judgment with computational tools. Giustini's chapter offers a trenchant critique of the ethical challenges posed by technology, from dehumanization and labor precarity to data bias. Mellinger then examines interpreter cognition, using frameworks like embodied, embedded, enactive, extended, and affective (4EA) to explore how practitioners engage with digital tools. The subsequent chapter by Guarnieri and Ghinos demystifies ISO standards in interpreting, clarifying key distinctions between standardization, certification, and accreditation to provide practical guidance. Rütten analyzes how technology has reshaped workflows through temporal, cognitive, and business lenses. In the concluding chapter, Figiel reframes ergonomics as an issue of access and human rights, critiquing the inaccessibility of many RSI and CAI tools.

Beyond this comprehensive mapping, the handbook's principal strength is its sustained critical and human-centered perspective. Rather than a celebratory narrative, the book underscores the precarity and disorientation that accompany technological shifts. This critical stance resonates with findings from Roziner and Shlesinger (2010), who demonstrated that remote modalities can exacerbate stress and fatigue. By centering the interpreter's lived experience, the volume injects a much-needed balance into a discourse that has too often prioritized efficiency over human sustainability.

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A further strength is the handbook's pluralistic scope, extending well beyond institutionalized conference interpreting. Chapters on portable systems, VRS, and tablet-based workflows give crucial visibility to modalities practiced in less stable or marginalized contexts. This inclusive view aligns with Wadensjö's (1998) foundational framing of interpreting as a social interaction, reminding readers that technology is never neutral.

Pedagogically, the volume powerfully responds to the growing consensus that interpreter education must evolve in lockstep with technological change. Training is woven into nearly every discussion, from CAI usability and RSI preparedness to the role of digital pens and tablets in classroom settings. Several chapters explicitly advocate for the integration of hands-on technological training into interpreter curricula, emphasizing not only tool familiarity but also critical digital literacy, ergonomic awareness, and adaptability to evolving platforms. For example, contributions by Ünlü and Saina highlight how AI-enhanced tools, such as ASR and NLP, can be integrated into pedagogical practices, while also raising ethical and cognitive considerations for interpreter trainees. The volume also discusses peer-to-peer learning platforms and simulation-based environments as promising innovations in interpreter education. While Gile's (2009) seminal work emphasized cognitive management, this volume extends that thinking to encompass the interpreter as a reflexive, adaptive practitioner operating within increasingly complex and hybridized human-machine ecosystems.

Finally, the ethical reflections woven throughout the volume are among its most vital contributions. Giustini provides a rigorous techno-ethical critique, flagging risks of labor precarity and algorithmic bias, while Figiel draws on the experiences of visually impaired interpreters to expose how non-inclusive design in remote and CAI tools can exclude disabled practitioners. These concerns echo Ahmadova's (2025) call for a holistic ethics of translation that champions fair working conditions and human oversight.

Despite its many strengths, the volume is not without its structural limitations, which occasionally detract from its overall coherence. For instance, technologies like remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) and video-mediated interpreting (VMI) crop up

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in multiple chapters—such as those by Chmiel and Spinolo, Braun, and Seeber—yet these discussions lack clear cross-referencing or a broader comparative framework. This leads to a degree of redundancy and makes it unnecessarily challenging for readers to synthesize insights or trace thematic development across the volume.

Moreover, while the volume purports to address interpreting in a globalized and digital age, its scope largely reflects Euro-American academic and institutional contexts. Most case studies and contributors are based in Europe or North America. Even chapters focused on accessibility or inclusion (e.g., Chapter 22 by Figiel & Chapter 18 by Giustini) fall short of examining how these concerns manifest in under-resourced or multilingual regions of the Global South. This geographic imbalance limits the handbook's claim to global relevance and leaves critical gaps in understanding how technology shapes interpreting practices in diverse political, economic, and linguistic contexts.

In sum, this handbook offers a timely and insightful exploration of interpreting technologies with strong pedagogical relevance. It highlights the need to embed digital literacy, ethical awareness, and tool adaptability into interpreter education. By combining empirical research with practitioner perspectives, the volume equips educators and trainees to navigate emerging challenges in remote and AI-assisted interpreting. It stands as a valuable resource for shaping resilient, future-oriented interpreter training in an increasingly digital professional landscape.

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