Editorial: The Voice of Interpreter Educators

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A recent (19 October) headline in the *Guardian* read: "Humanities research: groundbreaking, life-changing but ignored" (Busl, 2015). In this issue, we argue for interpreter educators to have a stronger voice in society, in policy and in the media, through research dissemination and engaging in discussion and debate. This is a theme that we are probably all very aware of, and of which many of us undoubtedly strive to achieve in our everyday professional lives. At a time when Europe is facing its biggest influx of migrants and refugees to date, however, it seems very appropriate for the *International Journal of Interpreter Education* to revisit and highlight the need to make interpreting research findings applicable to interpreter education, professional and personal development and society at large.

Several contributors to the volume (Lee and Choi, Salaets and Balogh, and Verstraete) mention the common misconception that anyone who knows two languages can interpret, and the implications this can have for policy and (lack of) targeted interpreter education. It is precisely interpreter educators and researchers (and practitioners and consumers too) who need to educate policy makers of the need for trained interpreters. This is a particularly pertinent issue for rare languages such as refugee languages, which are often classed as languages of limited (or 'lesser') diffusion (LLDs; Slatyer, 2006), a term which can refer to both signed and spoken languages. LLDs are often used by small and geographically-dispersed communities, and in the case of refugee languages, may have also had the status of minority language in their original country (e.g., languages such as Hmong, Chin, Karen, and Rohingya). This status may have resulted in them not having been used in a wide range of domains (Fishman, 1999; see also Salaets & Balogh, this volume), meaning that technical terminology (e.g. health terminology) can be underdeveloped (e.g., Johnston & Napier, 2010; Major, Napier, Ferrara, & Johnston, 2012), which can pose particular challenges for interpreter education.

At our Translation and Interpreting programme at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, we have been running 'language neutral' programmes for spoken language interpreting students since the early 1990s, and as such we are very aware of some of the pedagogical issues involved in training much-needed interpreters of rare languages. However, such an undertaking also has a unique set of challenges, particularly around assessing practical skills and addressing the limitations of a 'one size fits all' approach, for example, with students from majority languages and those from LLDs working together in technical domains. We are constantly trying to improve our pedagogical practices as we build on past experience. Such is the need for interpreters in LLD in New Zealand that several government departments have decided to work with our university in offering rare-language interpreter scholarships to meet that demand.

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World events such as the unfolding refugee crisis—which is inextricably tied to the need for skilled professional interpreters—certainly remind us when it is time to take stock of where we are, and where we might need to be headed. To this end, the current volume of *IJIE* offers a thought-provoking mix of papers from both signed- and spoken-language interpreter educators and researchers, from the USA, Australia, South Korea, and Belgium. We begin with two research articles, both of which have broad relevance to educators and practitioners working in many different areas. We then move on to commentary and open forum contributions, which continue the important focus of this journal as a forum for interpreter educators, researchers, practitioners and consumers to exchange ideas and reflect on the work we do.

Previous work by interpreting researchers (Bancroft, 2013; Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012; Crezee, Atkinson, Pask, Wong & Au, 2015;, Heydon, & Mulayim, 2015) has shown that vicarious trauma (VT) is an oft-encountered element of our work that needs to be recognized so educators, interpreters and service providers can address it. In the first research article of this volume, Michael Harvey builds on his long experience as a therapist, moving the discussion beyond the obvious need for interpreters to engage in self-care toward ways we might actually benefit from such traumatic experiences. Harvey's article thus illustrates a mode of inquiry which may allow VT to become a catalyst for growth and personal development for those affected by it. His approach can be implemented in professional development, interpreter education, mentoring or supervision and debriefing, and is particularly timely in regard to world events; it also links closely to several other contributions in this volume that describe interpreting in potentially traumatising settings.

Jim Hlavac then provides a systematic comparison of the standards for certification (as well as training and/or testing) of community interpreters in four countries: Australia, Canada, Norway and the UK. The features of each system are analysed and discussed in relation to the recently released ISO Guidelines for Community Interpreting, with a focus on the range of skills required by different credentialing systems and implications of shifting trends within those systems. Hlavac's contribution provides a timely 'stocktake' of sorts, especially in light of the urgent need for professional interpreting services that several contributors in this volume highlight.

The Commentary section offers two papers that again focus on the interface between interpreter education and the reality of interpreting practice and societal needs. Relating closely to Hlavac's analysis of credentialing systems, Jieun Lee and Moonsun Choi describe the South Korean government's response to the need for interpreter education in rare languages, particularly in relation to asylum seekers. Lee and Choi describe the need for prescreening and assessment of basic interpreting skills, and propose a framework for developing interpreting skills for speakers of these languages in South Korea. Their framework could be adapted by interpreter educators and policy makers in other countries working with LLDs.

Brenda Nicodemus, Janis Cole and Laurie Swabey describe how we can draw on the narratives of experienced interpreter practitioners to help students in the classroom learn and reflect on the skills that they will need to develop as practitioners. This includes ethical decision making, in addition to linguistic and cultural competencies. Their open and innovative approach involved educators and students sharing ideas and constructing learning together. The paper provides a practical guide for other educators wishing to implement this approach in their classrooms, and is an excellent example of drawing on the community of practitioners to help develop the community of learners. Although it focuses on signed language interpreting it will no doubt have much broader relevance to spoken language interpreting and translation also.

Our Open Forum section features two contributions from traditionally multilingual and multicultural Belgium. In their opinion piece, Heidi Salaets and Katalin Balogh, educators and researchers at the University of Leuven, call for policy makers to implement the findings of interpreter education studies to meet newly arrived migrants' and refugees' urgent need for language access. The interview with Filip Verstraete adds the perspective of a consumer of interpreting services who has been advocating for language access for the Deaf community in Flanders, Belgium, ever since he was a young adult.

We also continue our Dissertation Abstracts section, so that readers can keep up to date with the latest doctoral and master's research theses that are of direct relevance to interpreter education. In this volume, the four abstracts all relate to ASL interpreting. We enjoy giving new and emerging researchers the opportunity to share their work with the readership of this journal and encourage graduates and supervisors to keep us informed as to interesting dissertation summaries for us to feature in future volumes.

We would like to remind our readers that we have a rolling call for manuscripts and we encourage those working in interpreter education to send in submissions, be they evidence-based research articles, book reviews, (ideas for) interviews, commentary pieces or summaries of dissertations.

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Does the refugee crisis and the increased need for interpreters of LLDs imply a shift away from the traditional focus on language-specific interpreter education? We would welcome contributions to this discussion for future volumes. Another interesting area for a future themed volume might be the benefits of digital technology for interpreter education and professional development. In fact, the 2015 InDialog conference on community interpreting involves presentations on the implementation of technology in interpreting and interpreting education; the 2016 Critical Link 8 conference has also called for presentations on similar themes. The 2013 InterpretAmerica Summit focused on the need for interpreters to make social media work for them professionally, and this is another topic on which we would welcome submissions. Please note, however, that these are *ideas* for future themed volumes and not restrictions; we welcome any submissions that have clear relevance to interpreter education.

This issue of *IJIE* combines many contributions which emphasize the exchange between interpreter education research and society: both the need for educators to draw on real life experiences and the need for society to sit up and take notice of the findings of research on and relating to interpreter education. We need to keep pushing the voice(s) of interpreter educators in the media and in policy making. To cite again from that powerful article in the Guardian:

> Humanities research teaches us about the world beyond the classroom, and beyond a job. . . . Humanities scholars need to take what feels—right now—like a risk, and engage in more public scholarship. (Busl, 2015)

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