Antonini, Rachele; Cirillo, Letizia; Rossato, Linda and Torresi, Ira (eds) (2017) *Non-professional Interpreting and Translation: State of the Art and Future of an Emerging Field of Research*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 415, €99/$149. ISBN 9789027258755.

The title and the subject of *Non-Professional Interpreting and Translation* are fraught with controversy. From the ethical and methodological decisions that arise when researching child language brokering to the very meaning of "non-professional interpreting and translation" when applied to settings as varied as jails and churches, Rachele Antonini, Letizia Cirillo, Linda Rossato and Ira Torresi should be congratulated for bringing together an edited volume which neatly encapsulates both some of the latest findings in this burgeoning field and the major controversies surrounding it.

Given the wide variety of settings and the sheer number of papers, it is helpful to discuss the salient themes of the book rather than giving a detailed account of each individual chapter. Indeed, whether the setting is healthcare institutions (as in the chapter by Baraldi & Gavioli), disaster relief in Haiti (as in the chapter by Rogl) or volunteer interpreting in religious settings (as in the papers by Hild and Hokkanen), the themes are much the same.

Foremost among these themes is the assumption that researching non-professional interpreting and translation (hereafter NPIT) needs to somehow be justified. The editors argue in their introduction that the primary motivation of research into NPIT and its primary defence against criticism from professional interpreters and translators, who would rather it did not exist, is quite simply that it exists and will continue existing, whether professionals like it or not (9). In this vein, Torresi's findings, drawn from a close analysis of child language brokers' own visual depictions of their experience that these children "see brokering as part of their everyday experience" (355) sits comfortably alongside the theoretical observation of Whyatt that anyone conversant in two or more languages may act as "legitimate intercultural mediators who are necessary and valuable in today's multilingual and multicultural communities" (61).

Within this descriptive reasoning, there is a surprising terminological eclecticism, which may be an attempt to deflect such criticism. There seems little appetite to accord the activities researched the status of "interpreting" or "translation" without some form of hedging or qualification. The term "non-professional translation and interpreting" (4-6) used by the editors sits

alongside Harris' chapter, which shows a preference for his coinage "natural translation" (29-44). The chapter by Orellana (65-82) and an entire section of the book instead uses the term "language brokering" (259-410), while Ticca prefers the term "lay interpreters" (107-130). Variation is even found within research on interpreting in the same setting, as can be seen for Hild's preference for the term "volunteer interpreting in religious settings," (177-194), compared to Hokkanen's choice to resort to "non-professional interpreting" (196).

It soon becomes clear that the differences between NPIT, volunteer interpreting, language brokering and even professional interpreting are fuzzy at best. The problematic nature of the supposed duality between non-professional and professional interpreting is most clearly discussed by Hokkanen (208-210), whose work as a professional interpreter who also interprets as a volunteer in church settings certainly makes it more difficult to resort to the dichotomy of professional interpreters being trained while non-professionals are not. For Ticca, empirical research on non-professional interpreting may even result in "challenging our current theoretical understanding of "professional" identities … and revising them accordingly" (127).

The context of this suggestion, and the third strand of the book, is that the work of non-professional interpreters and translators often seems more attuned to the social context of the event than would normally be permissible under interpreter codes of ethics. This point is made explicitly by Baraldi & Gavioli, who suggest that these codes "may convey attitudes that are too restrictive to adequately deal with bilingual communication of the type we have seen" (103) in medical settings in Italy where the local institutional preference was to hire "cultural mediators" (84) rather than interpreters. The research in this book would therefore suggest NPIT may be a source of challenge and even improvement to the professions.

Despite this possibility, the book contains repeated assertions that NPIT work somehow goes beyond that of "mere translators" (107), which appears as a reflection of a wish not to rock the normative professional boat (see 9, for example). Such assertions are problematic given the range of roles and scope of agency of professional interpreters found in the work of scholars such as Roy (1999), Angelelli (2004) and Angermeyer (2015), of which the theoretical and practical import is discussed by Downie (2017).

This accessible and wide-ranging volume should therefore be required reading for both professional practitioners, who may find themselves questioning their own ethical norms and their views of their own practice,

and researchers in Interpreting Studies. The latter will find themselves having to confront the ubiquity of NPIT, its effects on its users and practitioners and the question of whether our terminological choices are helpful additions or attempts to deflect potential criticism of the practices we describe and research.

Bibliography

- **Angelelli, Claudia V**. (2004) *Medical Interpreting and Cross-cultural Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- **Angermeyer, Philipp S**. (2015) *Speak English or What? Codeswitching and Interpreter Use in New York City Courts*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- **Downie, Jonathan D**. (2017) "Finding and critiquing the invisible interpreter–a response to Uldis Ozolins." *Interpreting* 19 (2), 260–270.
- **Roy, Cynthia B**. (1999) *Interpreting As a Discourse Process*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jonathan D. Downie
Independent Researcher
E-mail: jonathan.downie@gmail.com