Federici, M. Federico (ed.) (2022) *Language as a Social Determinant of Health: Translating and Interpreting the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Palgrave Studies in Translating and Interpreting, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 323pp., ISBN 978-3-030-87819-1(Softcover) ISBN 978-3-030-87817-7 (eBook), GBP95.50 (eBook)/ GBP119.99 (Softcover Book)/ GBP119.99 (Hardcover Book)

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on various aspects of our lives, including the way language services are provided. The need for effective communication during the crisis became more evident than ever, as accurate and timely information was crucial for public safety.

Language as a Social Determinant of Health: Translating and Interpreting the COVID-19 Pandemic edited by Federico Marco Federici (2022) highlights the crucial role of translation and interpreting in multilingual crises, with a specific focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. It features contributions from various authors who analyze various risk communication plans and strategies implemented worldwide to effectively communicate public health crisis measures through translation and interpreting.

Intended for students and scholars of healthcare translation and interpreting, sociolinguistics and crisis communication, the book is subdivided into four parts entitled 'Terminologies and Narratives' (Chapters 2-4), 'Translating COVID-19 Credibility, Trust, Reliability' (Chapters 5-7), 'Health and Safety in Risk Communication' (Chapters 8-9) and 'Communities and Translation' (Chapters 10-11).

In the opening chapter, **Chapter 1**, Federico Marco Federici highlights the interconnectedness between language, health disparities and health outcomes. The chapter advocates for language as a fundamental human right and emphasizes the importance of timely crisis and emergency risk communication. Federici challenges the view on language as a barrier and encourages translation and interpreting researchers and professionals to recognize their advocacy role in creating more inclusive and equitable societies.

In the first part, Sami Chatti in **Chapter 2** explores the use of war metaphors in public health communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tunisia. The chapter suggests the need for reframing these metaphors to evoke hope and optimism. Sama Dawood in **Chapter 3** analyzes the translation of English COVID-19 awareness posters into Arabic, with a focus on

materials from the Government of New South Wales. It examines how the translations reflect linguistic hegemony and emphasizes the need to consider the audience's background and cultural values. María Laura Spoturno in **Chapter 4** explores the role of language and translation in shaping the perception of health risks during the COVID crisis in Argentina. The author analyzes how scientific research on the virus is transformed for a diverse readership. Spoturno examines articles from Argentinian newspapers and international sources to assess the impact of translation on news dissemination. A notable observation is the creation of an illusion for readers of *La Nación,* an Argentinian newspaper, where transformed articles give the impression of providing direct access to the content of the original source, such as *BBC Mundo Spanish*.

In the second part, Raden Arief Nugroho, Alfian Yoga Prananta, Syaiful Ade Septemuryantoro and Achmad Basariin in **Chapter 5** examine the translation challenges in conveying COVID-19 information in Indonesia. The chapter discusses the difficulties posed by neologisms and disease-related terminology in the *Guidelines for Corona Virus Disease 2019: Prevention, Control, Diagnosis, and Management*. Originally written in Chinese, this text was translated into English, and subsequently the English version was translated into Indonesian. The chapter emphasizes the importance of accuracy in medical translation. The findings highlight the challenges of conveying crucial information to a diverse audience, and the concepts of mistranslation and maltranslations in medical translation. Abdul Gabbar Al-Sharafi in **Chapter 6** examines credibility in risk communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Oman, specifically examining official statements and press conferences. The chapter explores strategies used by risk communicators to establish trust and credibility among the population, including the translation of these materials into English for non-Arabic speakers. It emphasizes the importance of transparency and accessibility in communication efforts. Al-Sharafi discusses the discrepancies between Arabic and English versions, which impact credibility among different language speakers. Bei Hu in **Chapter 7** underscores the need for effective and culturally sensitive communication within the Chinese communities in Australia during the ongoing pandemic. Hu explores the challenges of healthcare communication during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in multilingual societies. The chapter addresses issues such as terminology, stigmatization and the reception of translated information.

In the third part, Małgorzata Kodura in **Chapter 8** analyzes health and safety instructions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis draws upon materials obtained through an

online search, consisting primarily of bilingual publications in English and Polish. The chapter examines translation challenges and the pragmatic shifts that occur in the flow of pandemic-related information. By employing speech act theory for analysis, the study sheds light on the linguistic choices and communication strategies employed in health and safety instructions. Linda Rossato and Jessica Jane Nocellain in **Chapter 9** explore the translation of health and safety regulations for cruises in the context of post COVID-19 recovery efforts. The chapter analyzes the websites of five cruise lines to understand how health and safety discourse is conveyed. With the potential for overcrowding on cruises and increased virus transmission risks, health and safety discourse became crucial during the pandemic. Using multimodal and discourse analysis, the chapter examines written texts and non-verbal contents to compare cross-cultural elements and the role of images in localizing the message across different languages.

In the fourth part, Carmen Pena-Díaz in **Chapter 10** examines intercultural communication in health settings in Spain, specifically focusing on the perception of risks by users of interpreting and translation services. The study was conducted at La Paz hospital in Madrid during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through surveys and interviews with non-Spanish speaking migrants, the chapter aims to identify risk communication strategies and their effectiveness.

All the chapters in the book offer thought-provoking insights, but the final chapter, **Chapter 11** by Yanjiang Teng has particularly captured my attention. The exploration of the concept of the 'imagined community' discussed in this chapter offers a compelling framework for comprehending communication challenges that arise during crises. Consequently, I will devote more focused analysis to this chapter below.

In Chapter 11, Teng focuses on the essential role of citizen translators and interpreters in addressing the language requirements of multilinguistic communities during times of crisis.

In disaster situations, citizen translators and interpreters are often recruited in the absence of professional translators and interpreters due to cost and availability issues (Ogie & Perez, 2020). The effectiveness and capability of these untrained non-professional citizen translators to communicate in life-threatening situations are important factors to consider (Cadwell, 2021, p. 1). Teng emphasizes the need for further investigation into how these citizen translators cope with their responsibilities in disaster contexts.

The chapter highlights that crises introduce additional complexities, particularly when providing services remotely. This requires serving linguistically and culturally diverse communities from unfamiliar cultures. Teng refers to this concept as the 'imagined community', emphasizing the necessity for translators and interpreters to develop a deep understanding of the target community to ensure effective communication.

Teng presents the crisis communication strategy employed in Wuhan as an example, where citizen translators were rapidly recruited to address the translation needs arising from the outbreak of public health crisis. However, the involvement of citizen translators in crisis prevention and management remains understudied. leaving their experiences and interactions with vulnerable multilingual speakers largely unexplored. Further research in this area has the potential to enhance recruitment and training methodologies for future emergency scenarios.

Teng suggests the feasibility of encouraging individuals from the target community to serve as translators or interpreters. However, I believe further investigation is necessary to thoroughly assess the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. The utilization of children from multilingual communities as citizen translators for their parents or neighbors is a contentious issue. While they can serve as a bridge between government agencies and their parents during emergencies, established guidelines, such as those for utilizing interpreters in disaster mental health operations by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2003) discourage the use of survivors' friends, relatives, or children as interpreters. Factors such as discomfort in discussing personal matters with neighbors, and potential drawbacks in recruiting citizen translators within the target community should be carefully considered.

Teng highlights the importance of emotional support and discusses the diverse backgrounds of citizen translators. While it may not always be feasible to recruit language service providers who possess in-depth knowledge of the target community, Teng provides insightful suggestions for mitigating this challenge through careful planning and educational strategies. Additionally, Teng acknowledges an essential perspective regarding translators and interpreters, highlighting that language competence alone is not sufficient for these roles they undertake, including the provision of emotional support and intercultural awareness.

Language as a Social Determinant of Health highlights the crucial role of language in influencing health outcomes. By recognizing language as a social determinant of health, it becomes essential to prioritize language support to ensure equitable access to healthcare services for individuals of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Empowering individuals with

language support enables them to make informed choices about their health. The book emphasizes our collective responsibility to ensure that every individual receives the care they deserve. *Language as a Social Determinant of Health* serves as a reminder of the importance of language in healthcare and calls for action to promote inclusivity and equity in healthcare systems.

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