

Crezee, Ineke, H. M., Mikkelsen, Holly and Monzon-Storey, Laura (2015). *Introduction to Healthcare for Spanish-speaking Interpreters and Translators*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 388, EUR 36.00. ISBN 978 90 272 1222 1.

What is essential is not a medical degree, but a broad understanding of the fundamentals and knowledge of how to acquire, in the most efficient manner, an understanding of other elements as and when necessary (Wakabayashi 1996: 357).

Judy Wakabayashi's words above stress that one of the main concerns of medical translators with a linguistic background is their lack of formal medical training. *Introduction to Healthcare for Spanish-speaking Interpreters and Translators* is a very comprehensive guide that aims to bridge this gap by providing the conceptual, cultural and terminological cores which medical translators and interpreters with a linguistic background must be familiar with when working in healthcare settings.

The book, based on a previous version that generally addresses English-speaking countries more (Crezee 2013), focuses specifically on the US context and the English-Spanish language combination. Its aim is twofold: to serve practising medical-healthcare interpreters and translators as a reference guide to check on basic medical knowledge and terminology; and to be used as a textbook by trainers in this field.

As in the previous version, the book has 28 chapters structured in three parts. They are all easy to read, go straight to the point, and include a "Summary of main points" section to help readers understand what has been explained in a nutshell.

Part I. Interpreting (Chapters 1-4) is a brief introduction to healthcare interpreting. Chapter 1 concisely tackles general aspects of the interpreting profession and some of the challenges involved from a research/training perspective. Chapter 2 deals with the competences that interpreters need to possess based on explanations with practical examples of the most characteristic challenges they have to face: being familiar with medical concepts or codes of ethics, being able to paraphrase medical terms, deliver bad news, etc. Chapter 3 focuses on how cultural beliefs about health and illness can hamper effective communication. Anecdotes and real examples of experiences with patients from different cultures are provided to illustrate such aspects. Chapter 4 addresses the US healthcare insurance system by providing a very detailed explanation of types of insurance plans, government programmes or healthcare legislation. A glossary of insurance terms with their definition is also included.

Part II. Interpreting in healthcare settings (Chapters 5-16) is a comprehensive overview of how healthcare services in the US context are

organised, and it covers a wide range of settings: primary care services (Chapter 5); specialty clinics (Chapter 6); hospitals (Chapter 7), including specific services, e.g. emergency departments (Chapter 8), pre- and post-operative care settings (Chapter 10) and intensive care units (Chapter 11). This part also covers some branches of medicine that can pose cultural problems because they are particularly sensitive or because cultural differences may lead patients to behave differently from what doctors expect. These branches are obstetrics (Chapter 12), child health (Chapter 13), speech-language therapy (Chapter 14), mental health (Chapter 15) and oncology (Chapter 16). A chapter about informed consent procedures (Chapter 9) is also included. With these chapters, readers can find typical questions doctors ask patients; health professionals involved; or common procedures, diagnostic tests and treatment methods. An extremely valuable English-Spanish glossary, including the terms and expressions commonly used in these settings, supplements all chapters (except 5, 6 and 9). An abbreviation that refers to certain Spanish-speaking countries is added, whenever appropriate, to indicate different translations of the same term according to the country.

Part III. Health specialties (Chapters 17-28) provides the basic knowledge that interpreters need to acquire “to interpret accurately” (13) and “to do their job with a better knowledge of the subject area” (xix). This is structured around body systems: nervous system (Chapter 17), circulatory system (Chapter 18), respiratory system (Chapter 19), blood and blood disorders (Chapter 20), skeletal system (Chapter 21), motor system (Chapter 22), sensory system (Chapter 23), immune and lymphatic systems (Chapter 24), endocrine system (Chapter 25), digestive system (Chapter 26), urinary system (Chapter 27) and reproductive systems (Chapter 28). In each chapter, readers will find information about anatomy, physiology, health professionals involved, common conditions, diagnostic tests and treatment options, and a list of related terms with Latin and Greek roots and their explanations. Again an English-Spanish glossary is included at the end of all chapters. The effort made by the authors to explain medical concepts in a very easy-to-read manner that avoids jargon is noteworthy. The pictures, with terms in both English and Spanish, also help readers comprehend complex concepts. These traits are what make the book particularly useful for interpreters and translators. Plenty of books are available to learn about the basics of medicine, but not many (if any) have been written with interpreters and translators and their needs in mind. Cooperation between authors of different backgrounds (a healthcare professional, a practising interpreter and an educator) is certainly a valuable aspect to achieve this goal.

The book is complemented with an appendix of some common diagnostic tests, a list of references and suggested further readings, a list of useful websites, and an alphabetical index of medical-healthcare-related terms.

As minor issues, it is unfortunate that Chapters 5, 6 and 9 do not include a glossary and the reason for this is not explained. Including Spanish equivalents in the insurance glossary in Chapter 4 would have also been useful.

Apart from these minor points of criticism, the authors have succeeded in providing a very valuable guide that covers what interpreters and translators need to know. I certainly recommend this book, especially to those who teach/work with the English-Spanish language combination.

References

- **Creeze, Ineke H. M.** (2013): *Introduction to Healthcare for Interpreters and Translators*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- **Wakabayashi, Judy** (1996): "Teaching medical translation," *Meta* 41(3): 356-365.

Ana Muñoz-Miquel
Universitat de València
E-mail: Ana.Munoz@uv.es