



Book Review: the Routledge Handbook of Translation and Ethics

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Abstract

Translation always faces various ethics issues. Ethics in translation has attracted widespread attention from researchers around the world. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Ethics* published in 2021 comprehensively discusses various ethics issues in translation and translation studies, including but not limited to the fundamental ethical theories, ethics of translators and translation industry in different contexts, as well as the new challenges and trends with the development of globalization and technology, and provides new perspectives and critical thoughts for the translation ethics research.

Keywords Book review · Translation · Ethics

As a complex and multi-dimensional human cognition and information processing activity, translation has different forms and always inevitably involves various elements such as interpersonal relationship and cultural environments. Translation ethics has been discussed and attracted growing attention since it was proposed more than 30 years ago (Berman, 1992). With the intensification of globalization and the development of technology and informatization, ethics issues and challenges in translation have become increasingly prominent. Correspondingly, academic research on translation ethics is necessary. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Ethics* (edited by Kaisa Koskinen and Nike K. Pokorn, published in 2021), one of the series of *Routledge Handbooks in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, provides a comprehensive overview of ethics in translating and interpreting, in a meta-ethical way.

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The handbook is composed of 31 chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, framing the definition of ethics and ethics in translation studies and giving an outline of the book. The remaining 30 chapters are divided into four parts and each of them focuses on one topic. Part I introduces the most influential ethical theories in the field of translation. Part II focuses on the responsibilities of agents in different contexts and the ethical dilemmas they face. Part III takes a critical look at institutions, collectives, and individuals to (re)construct ethics in translator and interpreters' education. The last part, Part IV discusses some special issues and new challenges in practical translating and interpreting scenarios, and signals new directions for further study. Each chapter in the four parts is organized in a similar structure, including introduction, history, core issues, new challenges, and conclusion, as well as recommended further reading at the end. Each part is introduced and discussed in more depth below.

Part I (Chapter 2 to Chapter 11) shows a full map of the fundamental ethical theories and traditions, providing an insight into the development of ethical thinking. Chapter 2 discusses important and central virtue ethics in translation, including but not limited to fidelity, loyalty, integrity and honesty. Chapter 3, aiming at elucidating Chinese tradition, explores Chinese discourse on translation ethics, which is deeply affected by Confucian ethics. Chapter 4 reviews socialist translation theories in historical and political contexts and provides an overview of the emergence of socialist translation ethics. Chapter 5 discusses the translation theories and ethics from the perspective of functionalist approaches. Chapter 6 mainly focuses on the ethics and contributions of two French thinkers: Antoine Berman (1942–1991) and Henri Meschonnic (1932–2009). Chapter 7 centers on the linguistic hospitality and untranslatability ethics theories of two philosophers: Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) and Paul Ricœur (1913–2005). Chapter 8 discusses postcolonial translation ethics with the emphasis on decolonization. Chapter 9 depicts the relations between feminisms and feminist translation ethics, emphasizing the urgency of developing ethical framework for decolonization. Chapter 10 introduces a famous scholar in the field of translation studies, Lawrence Venuti and his theoretical contributions: ethics of location and ethics of difference. Chapter 11 analyzes the translator ethics developed by Anthony Pym, which focuses on the people involved in translation activities rather than on the texts.

Part II (Chapter 12 to Chapter 19) looks at the translator ethics in various contexts that can guide the ethical demands on translators and interpreters. The professional translator ethics (Chapter 12) formulates the definition of professional translators and discusses the ethical questions they may encounter. Chapter 13 reviews key approaches of literary translator ethics such as Meschonnic's poetic approach (Meschonnic, 2011), Steiner's hermeneutic approach (Steiner, 1998), and Descriptive translation studies (DTS) (Toury, 1995). Conference interpreter ethical virtues like competence, integrity, confidentiality, neutrality, and fidelity are discussed in Chapter 14. Chapter 15 then discusses ethics in public service interpreting of both spoken and sign language. Chapter 16 brings up ethical issues related to volunteering in translation and interpreting, followed by ethics of the activist translation and interpreting that supports political agendas and struggles at both local and global level (Chapter 17). Chapter 18 turns to the relations between ethics and modern

translation technology in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) era, such as machine translation (MT), computer-aided translation (CAT) and translation memory. Chapter 19, Translation and Posthumanism, focuses on the ethical implications of translation technology in various forms of posthuman, including globotics, patronage, labour and data extractivism.

Part III (Chapter 20 to Chapter 24) covers the ethical topics in translation industry or institutions and organizations. Chapter 20 focuses on different ethics codes related to translation practices and expectations for translators and interpreters. Chapter 21 discusses ethical issues in translation industry such as disparities of power, ownership of resources and the challenge of crowdsourcing. Chapter 22 concentrates on the Ethics *in* translator and interpreter (T&I) education, emphasizing the translator's responsibilities in the process of translation teaching. The next Chapter 23 addresses the Ethics *of* T&I education: how the T&I educational institutions and their educational practices should understand ethics. And Chapter 24 provides an overview of research ethics in translation and interpreting studies.

As the final section of this handbook, Part IV (Chapter 25 to Chapter 31) presents the emerging challenges and trends in translator and interpreter ethics. This part starts with the ethics in child language brokering (Chapter 25) which refer to the process whereby children or young people translate or interpret from one language to another for adult family members to enable intercultural and inter-linguistic communication. The following chapters respectively illuminate ethics of translating and interpreting in conflict and crisis associated with mass migration, humanitarian emergency or gender violence (Chapter 26); ethical stress in translation and interpreting that may result in nefarious consequences for individuals (Chapter 27); linguistic first aid to overcome linguistic barriers in various situations (Chapter 28); ethics of translation of sacred texts with three key ethical considerations (Chapter 29); ethics of collaboration and control in literary translation (Chapter 30); and accessibility and linguistic rights in translating and interpreting (Chapter 31) that aim at guaranteeing equal commutation for all the people (healthy and disabled).

As a researcher devoted to machine translation and modern translation technology for many years, I am especially impressed and inspired by Chapter 18 and Chapter 28. Though improving translation quality and saving time and efforts, new translation technologies and approaches have also created many ethical problems and challenges that we must face and try to solve. Some of these challenges, like data confidentiality and privacy, are not only closely related to translation, but also related to the whole society of AI (Zhang et al., 2022). The detailed discussion of the core and emerging issues in Chapter 18 provides a new insight for us to balance the relationship between technology and ethics. Linguistic first aid in Chapter 28 is also one of the most popular topics in recent years, especially under the global influence of COVID-19. For example, China has been providing multilingual translation service for foreigners in China to help them accurately understand the policies and requirements of epidemic prevention, and these practices have achieved good results (Li et al., 2020). In many emergency situations, providing timely and accurate language services is essential to overcome the language barriers and has already attracted many countries and regions' attention around the world, especially those with multilingual communities (O'Brien, 2020).

In conclusion, the well-structured handbook provides a comprehensive and full landscape on translation and ethics studies from various perspectives and inspires critical ideas. With its many unique features, this handbook is highly recommended for students majoring in (machine) translation, translation researchers and scholars, practitioners such as translators and interpreters, as well as other readers who are interested in translation, to build up a better and in-depth understanding of translation ethics.

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