From editing to editing — via professional practice, teaching and research

Miriam Shlesinger interviewed by Tanya Voinova

Although the interview is supposed to focus mainly on your work as editor of *Interpreting*, we hope you can tell us about your professional and academic background. After all, these aspects are always interconnected. There is a well-known bio-sketch, according to which you came to Israel to study medicine, so you enrolled in musicology, and that's why you're a translator. Like many of us, you were a translator and interpreter before you became a trainer and a researcher — or an editor. How did it all begin?

Well, in 1970 I had just finished my studies in musicology, and I figured that I'd like to take some more private lessons in music theory, so I went to a music theorist, a well-known teacher from the music academy, who quickly realized that I was not particularly talented in music, but that I did have a gift for languages and I knew English. He had just written a book which had been translated badly and he was desperate for someone who would fix the translation. Very quickly, before I realized what was happening, he talked me into giving up the private lessons in music theory and adopting the new pursuit of editing his book. I hadn't a clue about what was meant by editing a book, I knew nothing about translation, I had never even considered this option, but I took it upon myself and discovered that actually I was much better at this than I was at music theory, and I enjoyed it immensely. Ultimately this became the first book that I translated and edited. I actually translated it in the end from scratch. It was called *Harmony in its Systemic and its Phenomenological Aspects*, a very fancy book, about 500 pages long, which is still used in the music academy to this day apparently. So that was how it all began in terms of my initiation into translation. That was in 1970.

As time went by, in 1973, I heard that a translation department had opened at Bar-Ilan. It was the very first such department — and I signed up to study translation. I knew nothing about interpreting. I didn't even know there was such a thing. But of course in the department, interpreting was taught, and very quickly I was

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sucked into it. I discovered that I loved it and that I enjoyed doing it, and that this was really what I'd like to do as a profession. Very quickly, even before I finished my studies, I was already working in a booth, employed by my two teachers. In retrospect, I think there is something rather unsavory about such an arrangement, but I didn't give it any thought at the time. Anyway, that's how it all began in terms of interpreting as a professional pursuit.

In terms of academic interest and research, it took a few more years, because the course at Bar-Ilan was not research-oriented at all, it was hands-on, very practical, and it was only in 1980 that I first heard of Gideon Toury at Tel-Aviv University and approached him about the possibility of studying translation theory and applying it to the study of interpreting. I was under the illusion that no one had ever done this before, and that interpreting was a *terra incognita* for everyone. Of course, eventually I discovered that I was not really inventing the wheel; the wheel had already been invented, and considerable research had already been done though it took me a while to discover it. So, gradually, I took it as my challenge to do research on interpreting, to read up on it and so on. Even though Gideon personally was not very familiar, at least initially, with what interpreting was all about, he was an immensely helpful mentor. Those were the days when most research on interpreting was about cognitive aspects and a bit about training, but there was very little on the persona of the interpreter or on the social circumstances or political implications and so on. Most of it was about cognition and about spoken (mainly simultaneous) conference interpreting. And so I read up about dichotic listening tasks and lateralization of the brain during interpreting and about the relative depth of processing of consecutive versus simultaneous versus sight translation and so on, and eventually I decided to do my thesis under Gideon's supervision and to take actual recordings of interpreters at work and to see how interpreting affected the style of their outputs — whether the output of the interpreted product was more or less the same stylistically in the target language or whether it was more literate, or more or less oral than the input. This was my MA topic. I won't get into it now, but eventually some colleagues regarded this research as something that had been worth investigating, so I was glad that I had chosen that topic and glad that Gideon had encouraged me in that pursuit. That's how it began at MA level.

After I submitted my MA, I was actually in the midst of interpreting at the Demjanjuk trial (this was in the late eighties), so I was really very busy just working and also teaching by then (not to mention raising three daughters). The trial was over in 1990 and I had time to breathe. I'd been teaching for a very long time, at several institutions, and it was time to do something new. I wrote several papers about various smaller studies I had done, but eventually it was time to do a PhD, for which I needed to get away from my ordinary setting, where I couldn't seem

to get started. Time away from one's usual setting seems almost a prerequisite at that crucial stage — so I left. I first spent two months at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen. The treasures of that library — a collection devoted primarily to cognitive psychology — were the building blocks of my initial proposal, and after two months I began to have an idea of the direction that my PhD would take. I needed still more time away, and was enormously grateful when Mona Baker invited me to spend some time working in Manchester. (She was working out of home, and basically put her office at my disposal!) She also arranged for me to spend some time at the University of East Anglia, where I composed the experimental texts that were to serve as the backbone of my research. I doubt that without those seven months — two in Holland, four in Manchester and one in Norwich — I would ever have finished, but once I got back home, I was far enough into it to keep going. So, in 2000 I finally submitted my PhD on the strategic allocation of working memory and other attentional resources in simultaneous interpreting.

Most people first do a PhD and then write papers, some of them new and some based on their doctoral research. With me, the sequence was reversed. I had written many papers, but had not stopped working for long enough to do a PhD. Now, it was done, at last.

In terms of how it all began at the level of teaching, as soon as I finished my studies at Bar-Ilan in 1979, I began teaching, and I absolutely adored teaching interpreting. I discovered that the best way to be a really alert interpreter and to keep up with terminology, on the one hand, and with the strategies that you need in order to function in a booth, on the other, is to teach students how to cope with the challenges of interpreting. So I spent a lot of time reading background material on the pedagogy of interpreting, on how to teach it, and generally I've been teaching it, for 34 years. So that's in terms of teaching. I focused on simultaneous, but also consecutive, and sight translation, alongside the teaching of written translation, which I've done also through the years. Of course, I've also mentored dozens of theses and some dissertations. Serving as a thesis advisor is an excellent way of making sure you keep up with what is happening, and maintain a very broad view of new developments in the field.

In terms of how my life as a professional interpreter began, again, while I was still studying, I interpreted, and later, I was fortunate enough to play a role in some landmark events, such as major trials, diplomatic visits, peace conferences, summit meetings, interviews on the White House lawn, flights to Egypt where the Foreign Minister was to meet with President Mubarak, flights to Moscow to participate in international gatherings, trials in Australia and in Canada and so on. So there is no doubt that the career of an interpreter can be enormously exciting despite the severe limitations of my meager language combination — only two languages — particularly if you are in the right place at the right time.

In 1983 I joined AIIC. Initially there was a bit of resistance to my request to have a double A. The resistance had more to do with local politics than with my language abilities, but I won't go into that. Anyway, after a few years, I did receive a double A, Hebrew and English, because indeed those two languages in my case are both at mother tongue level and they both are mother tongues. The downside is that I don't have any other languages, I only have those two. Much much later I also joined the AIIC Research Committee and I've been active in that committee ever since. I was active in launching the Workload Study and in what is now referred to as the Lifespan Study, which follows the careers of interpreters who have retired. We interview interpreters at age 70 and above to learn more about what their career was like and about what caused them eventually to retire from interpreting, and what kinds of cognitive or other changes they underwent towards the ends of their careers. So I have been involved in that kind of research.

But apart from that, as an individual, I have had the privilege of taking part in most of what seemed like the most important types of research being conducted in Interpreting Studies: cognitive processes, the social aspects, the persona of the interpreter and more. Most of the major themes that have run through Interpreting Studies over the past 30 years. I have simply been exposed to these and have tried to play a role in the research scene. So if you take for example the cognitive aspects, one thing that really interested me was how much we retain as we interpret, so I looked at some of that. Another aspect that interested me was the intonation of interpreters. Why do we sound a bit weird when we interpret? What are the reasons for that and what effect does it have on our listeners? Another thing was the cohesion of the interpreted text. Is it less cohesive than the input text, and if so — why? These are some of the issues in which I did research, but then I gradually moved on to the more social aspects, and in recent years my focus has been on community interpreting and particularly on healthcare interpreting, but that's another issue. At the same time, over the past six or seven years, I have also been greatly interested in the fantastic potential of corpus-based research to tell us things we would never have been able to discover by other methods. The few corpus-based studies I've done on the outputs of interpreters have made me very eager to continue working in this line of research — and even more importantly, to encourage younger scholars to choose this direction, which still seems very underrepresented in our research agenda. My interest in community interpreting, on the other hand, has to do with my involvement in human rights. During the early 90s I was extremely active in Amnesty International, I was head of the Israeli section, and like many translators and interpreters, I see a very strong interface between human rights activities, on the one hand, and the provision of interpreting, on the other, and this was manifested, or *is* manifested, in the growing concern, not only my own, the growing concern of so many of us, about the adequate provision

of interpreting for language minorities. And so, through this interface, I became more and more involved in the study of community interpreting and especially in the training of community interpreters, as well as research on this topic. And basically, this is what I focus on nowadays.

Another large area, a kind of subdivision of this, is sign language interpreting. After all, most sign language interpreting is a form of community interpreting. A few years ago, I founded a sign language interpreting program at Bar-Ilan, which I hoped would reduce the gap between the access that used to be provided to deaf people in Israel, and the access they can have — and should have — thanks to better-trained interpreters.

Your research covers so many different aspects of Interpreting Studies. Can you think of any topic(s) that you wish you could study more?

Well, actually, every one of the topics that I have done research on I wish I could study more, because I never feel that I've exhausted the topic, and, of course, one never does exhaust the topic when one does research. The idea is not to move on too quickly, but rather to stay with a particular topic at least until you feel that you have arrived at some significant findings and some significant conclusions, even if you don't exhaust it. I would still be interested in some of the cognitive aspects. For example, I'm still interested in figuring out why we — some of us, at least — seem not to remember a lot of what we interpret, as soon as we get up and leave the booth. This is perhaps an old-fashioned question, but it does still intrigue me. The question of directionality is still topical. Why is it easier for beginners to interpret from their A language into their B language, while more experienced interpreters find it easier to interpret from their B language into their A language? This too is a somewhat banal question by now, but there are some aspects of it that have yet to be explored.

There are certain topics that are particularly enticing and I'd still like to study them more closely. At the moment, these are mainly the ones that have to do with the social implications of interpreting, and even more specifically with the interface between political awareness, or the broader political picture, and the role of the community interpreter. This is far removed from what I used to do ten or twenty years ago. It's hard to even imagine that these are all part of the same discipline, or sub-discipline, as we sometimes call it, because they are so disparate in terms of their paradigms, in terms of the methodology, in terms of the questions we ask, in terms of the kinds of answers we are looking for. But in fact, all of them fall under the heading of Interpreting Studies.

When I say I would love to study more about the role of the community interpreter, I don't mean yet another study of the fuzzy boundaries or of role definitions as such. I'd like to study it from the perspective of the service provider and

the service recipient, because I think that we don't yet have enough knowledge of those perspectives: how they perceive the interpreter, how they feel they can be better served by interpreting. So this is one direction that I would dearly like to pursue further.

Maybe I should mention also that I'm intrigued by the status of the interpreter, by the way we as interpreters position ourselves in the world and gain prestige, or don't gain prestige, and the whole interrelationship between what we do and what we think we do and what we think others think of what we do. Why are conference interpreters, particularly those who work in high-profile settings, held in such high regard while community interpreters are not? There are some obvious answers to this, but there are also some subtle ones which I would love to study some more. I am sure that if I stopped and thought some more, there would be other aspects that I would mention, but these are some of the main ones that come to mind spontaneously.

You've mentioned your interest in the interface between political awareness and the role of the community interpreter. Would you allow yourself to enter into a more committed or engaged kind of research, as opposed to a descriptive form of research?

First of all, there isn't really a purely descriptive form of research. It's always to some extent shaped by where we come from and what kinds of approaches are in our background. Beyond that, yes, I think that I have only recently come to realize that I do want to look at things without any pretense of objectivity and to see how the community interpreter really interacts with, for example, victims of terrorism or victims of other violence, or how the community interpreter does or does not allow herself to project her own feelings, or how our own ideology and political positions shape what we do as interpreters. I am not saying that I have a definite viewpoint on what should be, but I'm very interested in what really happens, because a lot happens that hasn't been closely researched, I think.

I understand now why in your acceptance speech of the 2009 Danica Seleskovitch Award in Paris you said that "Interpreting, and Interpreting Studies, are at the very core of my being — of who I am and of what I do". And what about your work as editor? When and in what circumstances did you start it?

Interpreting was founded in 1996 by Barbara Moser-Mercer and Dominic Massaro, as you know, and was available to the Interpreting Studies community from 1996 onwards. At a certain point the publisher and the editors decided for various reasons to introduce a change of editorial staff, since the two editors were extremely busy with other things, and I was approached with the possibility of taking over as editor of the journal. I declined on the grounds that I couldn't possibly handle

this role single-handedly. I said that if my colleague Franz Pöchhacker would be prepared to share the load with me, I would consider it. I approached Franz, or perhaps it was the publishers who approached Franz, I don't remember at the moment, and fortunately, after considerable discussion between us — Franz is incredibly modest — he accepted.

Generally, the transition was both smooth and collegial, which made everything very friendly and efficient and the previous editors simply forwarded to us whatever materials they had at that point. Still, once Franz and I had taken over this role, we had to learn the job from the start. I, for one, had never served as the editor of a journal, which is a monumental task. In any case, once we accepted the role, which was in 2003, and we actually began editing together in 2004, there was no looking back. Specifically, the point at which we entered this role was in the living room of our colleague Jana Rejskova in Prague, where we sat for several hours, and later met with Bertie Kaal, of John Benjamins Publishing. So it was really there in Prague that the whole thing began. But it was not without its little distractions: As we sat in Jana's living room, Franz and Jana launched into a very lively investigation of the authentic source of plum dumplings, which Jana Rejskova claimed were Czech, whereas Franz claimed they were Austrian, and there was a discussion in which the authenticity of the two recipes was debated while I had the honor of tasting Jana's delectable product and enjoying the ambience in which all this was taking place. Only after this was settled (they agreed to disagree…) did Franz and I get back to discussing the details of our new management.…

How has your role as editor of *Interpreting* influenced you as a researcher and a trainer?

First of all, my role as editor of *Interpreting* has exposed me to the cutting edge research in our field, which of course has enabled me to know what's going on in terms of research, practice and training, which I probably would know anyway as a reader of *Interpreting*, but of course as co-editor I also get to read things that were perhaps eventually not published, or things that for various reasons were not submitted in the end, as well as books that are reviewed, and so on. It exposes me to everything that's going on, or almost everything that's going on, in the field. Beyond that, as a researcher I wouldn't say that it has influenced me directly, because my own directions of research are not really defined by the submissions to *Interpreting*, but it certainly did allow me to be more aware of the current developments and to take them into account on an ongoing basis in my own research.

As a trainer, yes, some of the submissions to *Interpreting* have to do with training, and every one of them has helped me re-think my own method of training. I must say that when it comes to training, all of us are still, after so many years, in the dark. There is so little systematic knowledge — I mean *real systematic* knowledge,

about training — so little solid empirical research on the effectiveness of alternative ways of approaching training — directionality, experience, multilingualism, note-taking and so on. There is a lot of speculation, a lot of theorizing, a lot of trial and error, but very little solid comparative research, partly because it's methodologically tricky, partly because it's very difficult to conduct longitudinal studies, because people drop in and out of courses, and the courses are often rather short, and it's difficult to see ongoing developments, it's difficult to compare groups of students, since there are so few students in any given class, in any given language combination, and the language profiles of the students often differ considerably so that it's difficult to find any kind of homogeneous group that can be compared to another. All in all, then, I think that when it comes to training, I have read and taken in everything that has been submitted to *Interpreting* since 2003, but there has been a general dearth of solid research on training and I wish that more such research would be conducted, perhaps in collaboration with people in education or other disciplines that focus on training, because basically, research on training for interpreting has many of the features of research on training for anything else. You want to start at a given point and see the ongoing effect of several alternative methods, and see which one works best, under which circumstances, and this basic approach to the study of training is valid for any discipline, not only for interpreting, but unfortunately it hasn't been sufficiently explored in our field as yet.

How do you think Interpreting Studies has evolved in the past 10 years since you became editor of the journal in 2003? What are the main challenges — and the main achievements — of the discipline so far?

Oh, this is a very big question. I don't think I'll be able to cover it, but let me say a few things. I think that the past ten years have seen a dramatic increase in the *quantity* of research being conducted in Interpreting Studies generally. When I entered the field, Interpreting Studies was seen as a very marginal part of Translation Studies, both at conferences and in publications and generally, in the amount of research being done in the different departments of translation, whereas now it is occupying a far larger space in the discipline.

Beyond that, as I mentioned, since I became editor, I mean since Franz and I became co-editors of the journal, there has been a gradual transition from cognitively oriented studies to more socially oriented ones. Which isn't to say that there aren't also cognitively oriented studies, and I certainly would not want to see the cognitive direction being neglected, but what I'm saying is that there has been a certain shift in a more social, or sociological direction, and, no less important, there has been a tremendous ramification or branching out into many sub-directions: legal interpreting, healthcare interpreting, ethnographic studies, and so on, where we require a lot more knowledge of disciplines around us.

Now, in terms of the challenges, I would say that the biggest challenge is to make sense of it all, to arrive at some kind of systematization of the ongoing research. Things are happening in all directions, we need to keep seeing the larger picture and to arrive at greater coordination among people performing research in different places, in different languages. That, by the way, is another big challenge: the fact that quite a lot of the research is done in languages that are not accessible to many of us, which is our own problem, as it were, but it's also the problem of our discipline and of other disciplines. People writing in China, in Germany, in France, in Spain have a right to use their own language, but if I cannot access it, I cannot base my readings or writings on what they have done, and this becomes ironically a big problem in the area of Translation Studies, a tremendous irony, but it is what it is. I imagine this is true of other disciplines as well, but we really do not have sufficient access to what goes on in Korean and Chinese etc. and I would dearly like to figure out a way to make these writings more accessible. That's one challenge, and as I mentioned, it's a problem of coordination, or of communication, among people performing similar studies in different places. The fact is that there is a tremendous increase in quantity. I mean it's incredible how much is being published… And it's very difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff, to know what to read, what is really good, what is worth promoting. There's a lot being published that is methodologically weak, and one of our challenges is to figure out what is worth following and what is not.

To get back to the question of the achievements, I would say the main achievement is that within this sheer increase in quantity there are of course some extremely worthwhile studies — papers, publications, books, dissertations. All of this, and the shift towards very real-world topics, such as asylum seekers, such as discourse analytical studies that involve transcription of naturalistic data, such as the vicarious traumatization of interpreters, all of these are topics that were almost unheard of ten years ago, and have come into the mainstream. And, as I mentioned, the arrival of sign language interpreting on the center stage is an achievement worth celebrating, the fact that it has been incorporated into Interpreting Studies in a big way, because, after all, sign language interpreting has so much in common with spoken language interpreting, and should never have been a separate issue. It actually preceded spoken-language community interpreting in some respects — when it comes to the code of ethics, and when it comes to professionalization, and to research as well, so that it makes great sense for the two to be linked very closely.

What role has *Interpreting* as a major journal in the field been playing in this evolution?

Well, I think that like any academic field, but particularly in an academic field that is undergoing dramatic changes and exploding from a small domain into one

that has become much more central in Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies is deeply affected by the journals that have sprouted up. But I think it goes without saying, without trying to brag, that *Interpreting* as a journal is perhaps the most important one in our discipline. And of course that raises the question of whether the field is shaped by the journal or the journal is shaped by the field. I think *Interpreting* is actually a very nice example of a truly reciprocal relationship, because, as Franz knows, every time we receive a paper to consider, we look at it not only in terms of its entry into the journal, but also in terms of the extent to which it reflects things that are happening in our field. The very fact that since we became editors there has been a major shift in terms of proportion from articles on cognitive issues to articles on social issues must be seen as reflecting the field, but the fact that we have chosen to give space to these articles also means that in a sense we are shaping the field, because people pick up the journal and this is what they see. So apparently in recent years most of what we have received has been more in the direction of what is known as "the social turn", and we are reflecting it, but, to some extent, we are also shaping it. So, to get back to the question, I think that *Interpreting* as a major journal has certainly played a significant role in the evolution of Interpreting Studies.

What do you think will guide the research agenda in Interpreting Studies in the next 10 years?

I think that as in any discipline our research agenda is guided partly by what happens within the various academic institutions, particularly those that seem to be the most prominent ones, on the one hand, and, by interactions between our discipline and other disciplines, on the other. Unfortunately, such interactions have been rather slow in developing and there aren't too many of them. Still, to take but one example, in recent years there has been an interaction with sociology. Some papers on interpreting have been published in sociological journals, and we, in turn, have published papers that are typically sociological. There have also been some interactions with medical studies, with legal studies, and also with cognitive-psychological journals and research, so that, to some extent, the agenda will be shaped by the kinds of interdisciplinary interactions that we enter into, and, on another level, by the work of the leading academic institutions.

But let's not assume that everything is predictable! Surely we can also expect some surprises. If an enterprising MA student or doctoral student decides to do a study on something that I can't even give as an example now, because it hasn't occurred to me, and if that study turns out to be outstandingly good, it may well shape the research agenda in the coming years. So it's much too hard to predict anything definite for a single year, let alone the next ten years.

What is that one suggestion of wisdom that you would offer an aspiring young IS scholar?

Well, if I had to offer only one suggestion of wisdom, it would be: Take time off from real life and ask yourself if you really do want to spend the next few months or years delving into an Interpreting Studies project, because no matter how you approach it, it's going to be hard work and often slow and seemingly Sisyphean, although I can assure you that in the end the rewards are great, but the process is often very trying and very exhausting. If you have really decided that this is what you want to do, whether because you want a career or because of whatever other reason, find the one area of Interpreting Studies that you consider absolutely vitally fascinating, something that you have a passion about. Don't choose it because your teacher likes it; don't choose it because you've read an interesting article or two; don't choose it because it seems to be the fashion. Choose something that *you* are really interested in. If you are fascinated by gender issues, try to see where gender issues interface with Interpreting Studies. If you are fascinated by legal issues, try to see how court interpreting or something to do with the law can generate a topic that will really send you. If you are fascinated by psychology, look for the psychological implications of the work of interpreters, and so on. Look for something that's really interesting. I can't really stop with just one suggestion, so here's one more: choose something manageable, something that will fit your resources (especially your time frame), especially since every project takes you longer than you expect anyway… After you've read what everyone has written on the topic — and you should read what everyone has written before — after you've read all of that, I would agree with Andrew Chesterman who often says "Don't just refer to all the people you agree with and all the people you've read. Stop and think critically. Think critically". This would be a significant part of my advice to an inspiring scholar. Don't accept anything at face value. Think whether you really believe it, think whether you can really question it or challenge it or turn it around somehow and put your own input into whatever you've read and try to create a synthesis between what has been said or studied before and what your own contribution is going to be, so that you can contribute to this topic, about which you have a passion and really move it forward.

How do you think *Interpreting* can grow as a journal?

Well, first of all I hope *Interpreting* can simply continue to do more or less what it has been doing. More or less, both in terms of size and in terms of variety, I am frankly fairly satisfied with what it is right now. It has evolved into a fairly sizable journal, which appears twice a year, I wouldn't expect it to appear more than twice a year, I wouldn't expect it to get any longer, but I would expect it to improve in

the sense that the number of papers being submitted is gradually growing so that we can be more and more selective in what gets published. From time to time we have had special issues centering on major themes — themes like aptitude, or like healthcare interpreting etc. — and I imagine that the editors will continue to create such special issues from time to time so as to foreground new topics that seem to be gaining ground. Another way in which it can grow might be by introducing a forum section, in which a topic is raised not as a reflection of ongoing research, but as something to be debated among colleagues, perhaps eliciting responses in the following issue and so on. From time to time, we've also had a section called Reports — a report on new courses, a report on what's going on in the international institutions and so on… This is a section of the journal that has been rather neglected and perhaps it can be re-introduced, but these are relatively minor matters. Of course, the current editors will be the ones to decide how exactly, if at all. Basically, I think, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

What do you like the most about your role as editor of *Interpreting*? What are your main challenges?

I think that what I like most about my role as editor of *Interpreting* is the sheer joy of being so directly in contact with what's happening in the field today. The fact that we are generally the ones who receive many of the papers being written today, so that we have access to the most state-of-the-art research, and the fact that we are in contact with people who recently completed dissertations and theses who aspire to publish the results of this research in our journal, is of course very gratifying. Generally, Franz and I have invested much more time than we ever would have imagined into making sure that each issue is as good as it possibly can be, if I may say so. This fact is very rewarding in itself, because a great deal of work does go into producing each and every issue.

The things that I see as most challenging are all the aspects that have to do with selecting, with deciding, with rejecting, or possibly telling someone that their paper is not good enough or with receiving negative reviews, having to forward them to the authors, and having to deal with this ping-pong of helping people improve what they regard as a fine, finished paper. Beyond that, another challenge has to do with the fact that in the journal itself we receive many papers that are poorly written but have something important to say. How do we cope with that? This is a very delicate issue, because they are poorly written often because people do not come from the Anglo-Saxon traditions and are submitting to what is basically an English-based journal. All this is very delicate and sensitive and often challenging, because above all, we want to be open and fair and receptive to unusual inputs as well.

I think that we have the very great challenge I wouldn't say of shaping the field but of reflecting the field, because whatever we publish in a way becomes

a reflection of the proportions of topics and their relative weight in the world of Interpreting Studies publications. So if we publish an issue and four papers out of six are, let's say, on remote interpreting, in a way this becomes a reflection of the fact that remote interpreting has become more prominent. True, it reflects the fact that people have sent us papers on remote interpreting, but it also reflects our decisions as to what merits being published. The same holds for book reviews, where we have to decide which books to have reviewed. Generally we do not review handbooks and manuals, but definitely do review books that come out and focus on research related to interpreting. All of these are challenges that we have confronted together. There is nothing I have confronted single-handedly, because everything that has been done over these years has always been in very close collaboration between Franz and myself.

Which brings me to the one single most vital element in this whole endeavor. I mean the *people* concerned. Above all, I mean my co-editor Franz, without whom I never would've begun this rather crazy project in the first place, and with whom it has been an immense joy to work. Franz and I have been a team for a very long time, and working with him is always the most gratifying, satisfying, enjoyable, constructive and creative enterprise possible. So this is basically the one most crucial element in the entire arrangement, but in addition, there's the fact that Minhua has agreed to take over, another person with whom I have had fabulous working relations and with whom it is a great joy to collaborate, so that being able to entrust this brainchild in the hands of such a wonderful duo as Franz and Minhua is of course an enormous relief and allows me to step back without any pangs of conscience or concern, because everything is running so smoothly. Additionally there is the editorial board and the advisory board which consist of outstanding colleagues, most of whom have been incredibly cooperative, helpful and constructive and have leaned over backwards to help Franz and me perform whatever tasks needed to be performed, so that in our field having such a warm, friendly and supportive relationship among individuals is by far the most important ingredient in this wonderful recipe known as editing a journal.

Is there anything that we have not asked that you would like to mention?

Not really, but please just let me say how grateful I am to you for giving me this opportunity to pause and reflect. While work on the journal has been immensely time-consuming and often challenging, it has also been enormously rewarding and has given me so much more than I can put into words right now. I'd just like to say again how grateful I am to have had this exceptional opportunity to play a role in some small way. I've enjoyed being behind the scenes and I've enjoyed the thinking process that went into each and every stage. I wish the very best to co-editors Franz and Minhua, and to the journal itself. Long may it flourish!