

TAKEDA, Kayoko (2010): *Interpreting the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. A Sociopolitical Analysis*. Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 183 p.

Manuela Fernández Sánchez

Volume 57, numéro 2, juin 2012

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1013963ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1013963ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (imprimé)

1492-1421 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Fernández Sánchez, M. (2012). Compte rendu de [TAKEDA, Kayoko (2010): *Interpreting the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. A Sociopolitical Analysis*. Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 183 p.] *Meta*, 57(2), 533–537.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1013963ar>

pas sur la qualité des traductions de l'anthologie puisque nous n'avons pas cherché à accéder aux originaux et surtout, parce qu'il s'agit ici d'un compte rendu plutôt que d'une analyse traductologique.

En plus d'aborder et d'analyser brièvement les thèmes des différentes pièces du troisième volume (par exemple, les relations mère-enfant, la violence et la cruauté, les conditions des marginaux, le processus créateur...), l'introduction de l'anthologie offre une courte mais intéressante réflexion sur l'art de la traduction théâtrale. Louise H. Forsyth élabore l'idée que toute traduction d'un texte de théâtre nécessite un processus d'interprétation, ce qui remet en question l'idée reçue voulant que la traduction du théâtre repose simplement sur les équivalences de dialecte et de niveau de langue.

D'un point de vue traductologique, il manque à cette anthologie la perspective des traducteurs. Les notes de traducteur sont très rares : on ne leur donne peut-être pas assez la parole. Cela dit, l'objectif avoué de ce livre est de faire découvrir les femmes-dramaturges du Québec. Accorder une plus grande place aux traducteurs et traductrices aurait peut-être nui à cet objectif.

Les œuvres de l'anthologie se déclinent comme suit : *Catch a Tiger* (de Nathalie Boisvert, traduit par Bobby Theodore), *Earthbound* (de Carole Fréchette, traduit par John Murrell), *When Books Come Tumbling Down* (de Marie-Ève Gagnon, traduit par Louise H. Forsyth), *Public Disorder* (d'Evelyn de la Chenelière, traduit par Morwyn Brebner), *Chinese Portrait of an Imposter* (de Dominick Parenteau-Leboeuf, traduit par Crystal Beliveau), *Rock, Paper, Jackknife...* (Marilyn Perreault, traduit par Nadine Desrochers), *Jouliks* (Marie-Christine Lê-Huu, traduit par Crystal Beliveau), *My Mother Dog* (de Louise Bombardier, traduit par Leanna Brodie), *Gisèle's Wedding Dress* (de Julie Vincent, traduit par Maureen Labonté) et *The Sound of Cracking Bones* (de Suzanne Lebeau, traduit par Julia Deschene et John Van Burek).

Ce livre s'adresse aux amoureux de la littérature ou de la dramaturgie québécoise, mais aussi aux traductologues à la recherche d'un corpus de travail novateur. Les étudiants et chercheurs qui s'intéressent à la traduction du théâtre trouveront sans doute la bibliographie intéressante, puisqu'elle réunit les titres les plus importants de la traductologie théâtrale.

CHANTAL GAGNON

Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada

TAKEDA, Kayoko (2010): *Interpreting the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. A Sociopolitical Analysis*. Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 183 p.

The book under review deals with the use of interpreting at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in the context of post-war Japan (1946-1948). Along with other not so recent works that come to the reviewer's mind, such as Gaiba's (1998) and Baigorri's (2000), Takeda's *Interpreting the Tokyo War Crimes Trial* fills a gap in historical research on interpreting and is a valuable contribution to the history of conference interpreting and to the history of interpreters who worked in such sensitive settings such as the first international criminal courts in the aftermath of World War II. In fact, the book is dedicated to these untrained interpreters who accepted this challenging assignment.

The book is the first extensive study on the subject in English. It is based on a Ph.D. thesis submitted by Professor Takeda in 2007 at the *Rovira i Virgili* University (Tarragona, Spain). She has also published articles on the topic as well as an additional book specifically oriented to Japanese readers. As far as we know, there are only a few exceptions to this very little show of interest to study the use of interpreting in this so-called Japanese counterpart of the Nuremberg Trials: Tomie Watanabe's thesis and other articles which are written in Japanese, although she has also published one article in English (Watanabe 2009), and Brian Harris, who has devoted three informative posts to the topic in his blog *Unprofessional Translation*.^{1,2}

The fact that the Nuremberg trials created a major judiciary precedent in applying for the first time effective criminal sanctions on individuals rather than on the states as a result of a "legal revolution" in international criminal law (Beigbeder 2006: 271) should not diminish the historical importance of many other exemplary judiciary trials, established in other countries to prosecute leading figures for the same crimes committed by the Nazis and their collaborators. According to some Japanese historians such as Totani, the Tokyo Trial was a lost opportunity in many aspects but it helped to set the historical records straight, to get as much documentation as possible about Japanese war effort, and "to allow the Japanese to come to terms with what their government and military had done during the war."³

The title of the book announces the topic without more specification. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the book needs a subtitle: "A Sociopolitical Analysis," which implies the author will theorize about contextual factors and fundamental questions that help to explain the particular situation that happened in Tokyo at the

International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), where the Allied Powers established a hierarchical structure for its interpreting system, which included interpreters, monitors, and language arbiters. More specifically, the Allied Powers had to hire about twenty-seven Japanese nationals to work as interpreters throughout the trial. The interpreters were Japanese citizens with bilingual backgrounds but no formal training as interpreters. In order to monitor the interpreters' work, the Allied Powers had to rely on four *Nisei* (second generation Japanese-Americans), who were all *Kibei*, born in the U.S. but raised in Japan and then returned to the United States. They worked for the U.S. Army as military intelligence staff against Japan during the Pacific War. The third level of this hierarchical structure of control was occupied by two bilingual U.S. military officers who were in charge of resolving linguistic disputes within the Language Arbitration Board.

The photographic image on the cover of the book is also worth mentioning. What the photograph shows us is three men sitting in a glass booth, wearing headphones branded IBM. The first two are probably Japanese interpreters, they are taking notes and look very focused on them. The other man who is sitting next to them is likely a monitor and is staring into the courtroom. Regarding the mode of interpreting, the image of interpreters wearing headphones branded IBM, the same equipment that was used for simultaneous interpreting at Nuremberg, leads us to make a connection with that historical event of the profession in its early days, but future readers have no way of knowing that the predominant mode of interpreting at the Tokyo tribunal was not simultaneous interpreting but consecutive interpreting with the particularity that it was practised from the booth. As professor Takeda explains (p. 37), IBM equipment was available but the Tribunal had come to the conclusion that simultaneous interpretation between English and Japanese was not possible because of the wide difference between the two languages. Simultaneous interpreting at the Tokyo Trial "was nothing more than simultaneous reading of a prepared translation, and it was actually delivered by the monitor, not the regular interpreters" (p. 38).

Since the main challenge of the book is precisely to explain why three different socioethnic groups played three different roles as language personnel in this interpreted trial, Takeda has done impressive archival work in order to reconstruct the social biography of most of them at the IMTFE as well as the linguistic difficulties they faced. On page 4 she lists a wide range of sources, beginning with two sets of trial transcripts, one in English and the other in Japanese, along with interviews

with two surviving Japanese interpreters, *Nisei* translators, and family members of the language personnel. In addition, she has consulted relevant tribunal documents, films and photographs, along with archival documents in many places within the United States and Japan.

The introduction prepares us for the six chapters of the book. From the outset, the author makes clear what is at stake when we study the court interpreter's role: the issue of the "role conflict" (Hatim and Mason 1990: 91), the issue of divided loyalties in the relations between interpreters and their clients, one of the most recurrent topics in the field of interpreting history in general, and one that became particularly relevant at the Tokyo Trial where Japanese nationals and Japanese-Americans citizens served as interpreters in a trial where the defendants were Japanese war leaders, specifically two former Japanese prime ministers, including General Hideki Tojo, the most visible face of the trial, and some twenty leading Japanese military figures.

The focus of chapter 1 is the historical background to the study of the IMTFE. The Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal was held from 3 May 1946 to 12 November 1948. It was a cumbersome and highly complex trial, carried out in two official languages (Japanese and English) and in many others used at different moments of the trial such as Russian, Chinese, Dutch, German, French, and Mongolian. In this chapter we learn that following months of preparation, after the Japanese Government signed the Instrument of Surrender on 2 September 1945, according to which Japan agreed to carry out the Postdam Declaration and to issue the orders of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur, the IMTFE first convened on 29 April 1946 to try Japanese leaders for three types of crimes: "Class A" crimes against peace, "Class B" conventional war crimes, and "Class C" crimes against humanity. The functions and procedural guidelines of the Tribunal had been approved and announced on 19 January 1946 in the form of the Tokyo Charter. The document had been modelled after the Nuremberg Charter. The trial continued for more than two and a half years whereas the main Nuremberg trial only lasted ten months (from 22 November 1945 to 31 August 1946). As precedent set in Nuremberg, the Tokyo Trial faced significant technical and logistic problems, including language difficulties. However, regarding the use of interpreting, both trials differed enormously: "There was no Japanese counterpart of Colonel Léon Dostert" (p. 18), who was capable of setting up the simultaneous interpreting system and to train the interpreters before the trial. On the other hand, at the Tokyo Trial, the decision to use predominantly consecutive

interpreting and the discussions of interpreting arrangements contributed to the length of the trial.

Chapter 2, entitled *The Interpreting Arrangements*, offers a detailed description of the languages and the modes of interpreting used at the trial, the recruitment of the interpreters and translators, the interpreting equipment and booth, and the effect of interpreting on the trial proceedings. As we mentioned before, both the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials were the first examples of innovative international justice. The prosecutors and judges were faced with technical difficulties related to unknown judicial procedures such as the accusatory process with examinations and cross-examinations. The complexity of the subject matter was significant, the number of witnesses who testified and the documentation that resulted was impressive. In addition, both Nuremberg and Tokyo were interpreted trials — which also required an important amount of translation work — and the difficulties related to communication through interpreters arose at different levels. According to sources consulted by Takeda, at the Tokyo Trial the inadequate linguistic competence of interpreters and their lack of experience in interpreting forced lawyers “to limit their remarks to short sentences in elementary language” (pp. 49-50). The president of the Tribunal, the Australian judge Sir William Webb, gave instructions to the speakers “to speak clearly, slowly and in short sentences” (p. 39). Some experts have discussed the language issue in terms of interpreting the rhetorical style of the Japanese language and culture, which is less direct than English (p. 50). In contrast to what happened at Nuremberg, the organizers at the Tokyo Tribunal did not anticipate neither the use of languages other than English and Japanese, nor the mode of interpreting. The Tokyo Charter did not specify the use of other languages either, which provoked hard discussions, extended recessions and ad hoc interpreting arrangements particularly during the early stages of the trial. In the end, the interpreting system at the Tokyo trial included the following characteristics: IBM equipment in the interpreter’s booth, consecutive interpreting between English and Japanese from the booth, simultaneous interpreting with Russian (because the Soviet judge, one of the eleven judges of the tribunal, could only understand Russian). Since the number of people who were fluent in both Japanese and other linguistic combination with Japanese was very limited, relay arrangements between English as the pivot language and other languages were also offered.

The interpreters were recruited from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and through advertisements in the press. Those who passed a test based on a mock trial were sent to the court-

room without training, they only received technical information about the courtroom. As a result, only around ten of the twenty-seven interpreters recorded in the transcripts worked regularly throughout the trial. In order to check the interpreters’ performance, the Language Section of the Tribunal recruited four *Nisei Kibei* with experience as linguists in military intelligence. They sat next to the interpreters in the booth, one monitor per session. Their role extended beyond the correction of interpreting errors, they were in charge of reading all the prepared translations simultaneously as they were delivered by the different participants in the courtroom. The language arbiters were involved in resolving translation and interpreting disputes and in delivering the corrected version for the record.

In chapter 3 and 4 we learn the personal profiles of the interpreters, monitors and language section chiefs who worked at the IMTFE. Takeda provides their social biographies which help us to understand the reasons they served as language personnel at the tribunal as well as the vital, yet nevertheless, ambivalent role of the *Nisei* monitors. Chapter 4 also explores the technical and political reasons that lead to the three-tier structure for the interpreting system, but before doing this the author takes us to the two Japanese war crimes trials that took place before the IMTFE (Manila, 29 October 1945; Yokohama, 18 December 1945). Both trials were disrupted by interpreting problems and both had relied on US military personnel who were not prepared enough for the task. In the meantime, the International Prosecution Section for the Tokyo Trial was being established as well as the Tokyo Charter, and the problem that had arisen in these earlier US criminal courts played out. Consequently, in order to avoid the same kind of problem together with the impact of poor interpreting in an international court which was supposed to be broadcast and followed from all over the world, the Language Section of the Tribunal decided to hire four *Nisei Kibei* to check the interpreters’ work not only in terms of accuracy but also in terms of security because the Japanese citizens who served as regular interpreters in the Tokyo Trial, addressed to try former Japanese leaders, were considered to be not entirely reliable. The Language Arbitration Board’s task was to check the monitors’ work: “all of whom, being *Kibei*, suffered even greater prejudice than other Japanese Americans” (p. 74).

As it is said throughout the book, it took several months after the beginning of the trial for the President of the Tribunal to become more familiar with the use of interpreting in court and become more appreciative of the interpreters’ work. The transcripts of the trial contain a large number of

discussions of interpreting procedures particularly during the first stages of the trial, which points out the learning process that inexperienced interpreters and inexperienced users of their services had to go through together in order to meet each other's expectations.

In Chapter 5, Takeda provides an analysis of the interpreters and monitors at work with the focus on the testimony of General Hideki Tojo. The way they behave during Tojo's testimony is illuminating not only for the specific position given to them in the "explicit" hierarchical structure of the interpreting system, but also in the "implicit" hierarchy they assumed according to their language competences. Monitors, for example, on many occasions tended to present their own versions after the interpreters had given their error-free interpretations. They offered Tojo explanations on the procedural issues and guided him on the way to answer the interpreters. Takeda concludes that "monitors were engaging in activities that were supposed to be performed by the supervisors, in ways that those supervisors would not be able to check" (p. 128), which means that at least one of them, Captain Edward Kraft, could not understand the content of the monitors's intervention in Japanese. In other words, the presence of the U.S. military on the top of the interpreting system was much more a display of authority than a guarantee of safety in linguistic issues.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the discussion of the influential role that the socio-political aspects of interpreting, such as trust, power and control, played in interpreting at the Tokyo Trial. These factors are inherent to the practice of interpreting and have contributed to the explanation of the interpreter's work throughout history. From this perspective, it is difficult to characterize the monitoring system established by the Allied Powers at the IMTFF as "a means to police the interpreters' behaviour." If the interpreters and monitors acted occasionally on their own initiative, in the form of adding information or communicating directly with a speaker without the court's permission, they did it with an intention to make the communication more efficient, given that they were not at all familiar with this type of mediated multilingual communication, but they also did it because they were aware of the limited linguistic competence of their supervisors, unable to warn or reprimand them as long as Japanese was used.

The last part of the chapter focuses on the process of negotiation of norms that led to establish the interpreting procedures at the Tokyo Trial. Takeda discusses from a critical perspective Toury's view about translation as a norm-governed activity. Applications of this norm-based approach to interpreting at the Tokyo Trial need to take into

consideration the way that untrained interpreters behaved regarding the existence of the norms, understood as the result of internalized social, cultural, and cognitive constraints. These norms may be implicit, such as the "true interpreter" norm (Harris 1990), which seems to be universal and is related to accuracy and reliability in the interpreter's work. Norms may be explicit too, that is, established by the Tribunal. According to Takeda, these last norms "were adjusted over the time in response to the interpreters' needs" (p. 144). Interpreters at the Tokyo Trial took practical initiatives to express their acceptance or lack of acceptance of norms according to their practical needs and abilities to fulfil their work. As a result of this process of adjustment, the interpreters and the users "became functioning participants" in the interpreted-mediated event (p. 146).

The book ends with a concluding chapter where Takeda assesses the use of interpreting at the IMTFF as a precursor to conference interpreting in Japan and draws a parallel as well between the ambivalent position of the *Nisei* monitors at the Tokyo Trial and foreign-born military linguists who are currently serving with the U.S. military. Takeda is right when she says that the experience of *Nisei* linguists is not an isolated case, but her principal contribution to the field is to draw attention to this neglected episode in the history of interpreting and in bringing justice to these silenced and forgotten interpreters' experiences.

M^a MANUELA FERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ
University of Granada, Granada, Spain

NOTES

1. HARRIS, Brian (2009; Last update: 17 September 2012): *Unprofessional Translation*. Visited on Date Month Year, <<http://unprofessional-translation.blogspot.com>>.
2. See posts entitled *Bilingualism and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal* (28 October 2010), *Bilingualism and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal – 2* (4 November 2010), and *Bilingualism and the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal – Conclusions* (6 November 2010).
3. POE, Marshall (3 April 2009): Interview with Yuma TOTANI regarding her book *The Tokyo War Crimes Trials: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II*. Part of the series *New Books in History*, <http://ir.uiowa.edu/history_nbih/52/>.

REFERENCES

- BAIGORRI, Jesús (2000): *La interpretación de conferencias: el nacimiento de una profesión*. De París a Nuremberg. Granada: Comares.
- BEIGBEDER, Yves (2006): *Judging War Crimes and Torture: French Justice and International*

- Criminal Tribunals and Commissions, 1940-2005*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.
- GAIBA, Francesca (1998): *The Origins of Simultaneous Interpretation: The Nuremberg Trial*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.
- HARRIS, Brian (1990): Norms in interpretation. *Target*. 2(1):115-1119.
- HATIM, Basil and MASON, Ian (1990): *Discourse and the translator*. London / New York: Longman.
- WATANABE, Tomie (2009): Interpretation at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. An Overview and Tojo's Cross-Examination. *TTR*. 22(1):57-91.

THIRY, Bernard (2009): *Terminología y Derecho. La responsabilidad civil extracontractual. Contribución a su tratamiento terminográfico y a la Teoría de la Terminología*. Granada: Editorial Atrio, 343 p.

En palabras del autor, el libro tiene como propósito proporcionar "una reflexión crítica sobre los principios teóricos de terminología y terminografía en esta materia jurídica de la Responsabilidad Civil y que atañen a dos órdenes de saberes y prácticas: el Derecho y la Terminología". De hecho, en la presentación, el autor alude a la reflexión crítica que lo llevó a publicar poco antes su *Diccionario jurídico: Terminología de la Responsabilidad civil (español-francés, francés-español)* del que extrae ejemplos para ilustrar los distintos temas abordados.

El texto se estructura en cinco apartados: 1. Introducción: Terminología y Terminografía aplicadas al derecho, 2. El Derecho a la luz de la Terminología, 3. La Terminología a la luz del Derecho. Conclusiones relativas a Terminología-Terminografía, 4. Anexos, 5. Bibliografía. Un índice alfabético de materias cierra el libro.

En la *Introducción*, menciona la dificultad de encontrar una sola teoría que resuma los principios del trabajo terminológico y la ausencia de consenso entre diversos autores jurídicos. En este aspecto, resalta el hecho de que el derecho vive a través de la lengua y que en ella se plasman las diferencias entre los distintos sistemas jurídicos, lo que dificulta la búsqueda de equivalencias totales. A modo de esbozo teórico, define los puntos clave de la teoría – definiciones de este término tan polisémico y la distinción entre terminología temática y terminología puntual, definición del *término* como resultante de la unión entre la *noción* y *denominación* y su función referencial, definición de la *noción* para fundar la actividad terminológica y el valor que cobra el término dentro del sistema de nociones a que remite. Más adelante en el capítulo, enumera los caracteres del "término ideal" (según la teoría wüsteriana) y sus defectos y presenta los distintos rasgos diferenciadores entre

palabra y *término* (morfológicos y gramaticales, entre otros). Las particularidades propias de los enfoques onomasiológico y semasiológico como parte de las metodologías adoptadas por la terminología y la lexicología, sus puntos de contacto y la posición adoptada por el autor en el presente trabajo respecto de estos dos enfoques son analizadas detalladamente en esta sección.

La necesidad de investigar en terminología se corresponde con su aplicación en el ámbito del derecho. En este sentido, el autor delimita la rama concreta dentro de este campo, cual es, el Derecho de la Responsabilidad civil extracontractual y expone, a continuación, los datos de delimitación objetiva del campo estudiado (delimitación positiva: lo que contiene, y negativa: lo que se excluye de él). Didácticamente, aporta un esquema en el que se leen los contenidos del área total de la Responsabilidad civil con los aportes del diccionario de su propio cuño. En este recorrido teórico, lleva a cabo una somera pero cuidadosa inclusión de los conceptos vertidos por otros autores sobre el tema, algunos de ellos confirmando los criterios adoptados por el autor en la investigación cuyo tratamiento nos ocupa, práctica que, por otro lado, se repite en todo el trabajo dando muestras de un conocimiento acabado y profundo del área de conocimiento explorada.

Este capítulo finaliza con la descripción de las etapas y métodos de trabajo: ya que se trata de una investigación de terminología bilingüe, las lenguas de trabajo escogidas son, respectivamente, el español y el francés. Una vez delimitado el campo y elegidos los sistemas jurídicos nacionales, el autor presenta el corpus de trabajo representativo del área estudiado que está constituido por los documentos (fuentes escritas) y los especialistas que se pueden consultar sobre el área investigada (fuentes orales). Presenta una síntesis bien articulada de las fuentes utilizadas (doctrina, códigos, diccionario) y el modo de utilización de dichas fuentes. Desde el punto de vista metodológico, clarifica las pautas a seguir en su trabajo terminográfico y muestra, con ejemplos concretos extraídos del diccionario, de qué manera se seleccionarán los términos sobre la base del esquema nocional establecido y se aprovecharán los datos de la investigación bajo la rúbrica "legislación".

Finalmente, para hacer comprensible su propuesta teórica, Bernard Thiry pasa a aplicarla al tratamiento de los aspectos formales del diccionario y a sus tres componentes: Esquema nocional, fichero e índices alfabéticos de términos.

En el siguiente capítulo, *el Derecho a la luz de la Terminología*, plantea los problemas de diversos orígenes e índoles que surgen al momento de definir las nociones del área estudiado y el grado de equivalencia, equivalencia literal o no coincidencia