Research methodology : Footing and positioning to conceptualise the interpersonal dynamics of an interpreter-mediated interaction

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InDialog 4 / ENPSIT

Multiplicity in public service interpreting and translation

18-19 September 2023

Ghent University, Belgium

Research objective

Methodological relevance of **combining footing and positioning**

to investigate the interactional dynamics of an interpreted bilingual encounter,

particularly in its **interpersonal dimension**,

in a flexible, inductive approach:

➢ Concept of **footing** < sociolinguistics (Goffman 1981/Wadensjö 1988)

  particularly fertile

  (e.g. Merlini & Favaron 2003; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee 2014; Defrancq & Verliefde 2017)

➢ Concept of **positioning** < social psychology (Davies & Harré 1990; Harré & van Langenhove 1999)

  descriptive power (Mason 2005, 2009; Merlini 2009)

  but still largely unapplied

Theoretical & conceptual framework

FOOTING Goffman (1981), Wadensjö (1998)	POSITIONING (Davies & Harré 1990; Harré & van Langenhove 1999)

Explanatory models of the interactional game

Intertextual focus = « Focusing at the level of utterances, a person's alignment (as speaker *and* hearer) to a particular utterance can be referred to as his/her footing » (Wadensjö 1998: 87)	**Interpersonal focus** = « a subjective position is a discursive projection of personal attributes that reflects the way in which a person considers what is said and, through what is said, co-builds his/her relationship to the other interactants » (Delizée 2021: 81)

Before the interaction
6 communicative perspectives:
<u>Reception</u> : Reporter, Recapitulator, Responder
<u>Production</u> : Animator, Author, Principal

Hic & nunc of the interaction
No pre-existing typology

Methodology & data

Relevance of the "footing-positioning" apparatus?

➢ both analytical lenses applied to the same discourse data

Variation of the results according to the setting?

➢ both analytical lenses applied to

1 excerpt from mental health interpreting (Delizée 2018)

- Psychotherapy (2 ½ years)
- Experienced (10 years) Russian-French female interpreter
  Degree in philology. Specific training in PSI (+-450h)
- Russian-speaking female patient, French-speaking male psychotherapist

1 excerpt from court interpreting (Defrancq & Verliefde 2017)

- Drugs trial, Correctional Court
- Experienced (10 years) Dutch-French female interpreter
  No specific training in court interpreting
- French-speaking female defendant, Dutch-speaking female judge

Turn	Analysis by footing	Analysis by positioning
1 **T**: show me your hands.	T=>I Reporter/Recapitulator	T=> I hetero-positioning as Conveyor of Meaning
2 **I**: show your hands.	I = Animator/Author	I = validation of Conveyor of meaning
3 **P**: what, <u>he</u> can read the future?	P=> I Responder	P=> I hetero-positioning as P's Teammate
4 **T**: there's nothing anymore.	T=>I Reporter/Recapitulator	T=> I extension of Conveyor of Meaning
5 **P**: [ah no, <u>he</u> can't read the future. **I**: [/*laughter*/	P=> I Responder I = Principal	P=> I extension of P's Teammate I = validation of P's Teammate & rejection of Conveyor of Meaning
6 **I**: can <u>you</u> read the future? /*laughter*/	I = Author I = Principal	I = concomittant self-positioning as Conveyor of Meaning & Relational Mediator
7 **I**: you don't have anything anymore.	I = Author	I = Resumption of Conveyor of Meaning

Main results from excerpt 1

Analysis by footing	Analysis by positioning
Interactional dynamics Constantly shifting & negotiated participation framework Shared responsibilities between *all* the participants	
Micro-level: « Zoom in » on the Original-Rendition pair	Macro-level: « Zoom out » on the interactive co-construction of positions throughout the interaction A projected position can be validated, rejected, modified, then resumed, etc.
Intertextual dimension: e.g. Animator/Author or Responder/Principal	*Interpersonal dimension* e.g. Patient's Teammate, Relational Mediator

Court interpreting (BD/SV/2014 – 164-172, Defrancq & Verliefde 2017)

Turn	Analysis by footing	Analysis by positioning
1 **J**: you needed assistance, how come that you suffered withdrawal symptoms if it was only very small amounts of heroin?	J=>I Reporter/Recapitulator	J=> I Hetero-positioning as Conveyor of Meaning
2 **I**: but how come that you need medical assistance if you was only an OCCASIONAL consumer?	I = Author	I = validation of Conveyor of meaning
3 **D**: ① I was already on my methadone programme, ② however,//	D=>I Reporter/Recapitulator	D = Extension of Conveyor of Meaning
4 **J**: <u>she</u> was already on what?>	J=> I Responder	J=> I Hetero-positioning as Co-Judge
5 **I**: <u>she</u> was already on a methadone programme but I think that she means that she took the methadone when she wasn't taking drugs and the other way round so she suffered withdrawal symptoms because she did not [take] methadone//	I = Principal	I = Reject of Co-Judge I = Self-positioning as Co-Defense Counsel

Main results from excerpts 1 & 2

Analysis by footing	Analysis by positioning
Interactional dynamics Constantly shifting & negotiated participation framework Shared responsibilities between *all* the participants	
Micro-level: « Zoom in » on the Primary Speaker's action-the Interpreter's reaction	Macro-level: « Zoom out » on the interactive interplay of affiliations thoughout the interaction
Intertextual dimension: e.g. Animator/Author or Responder/Principal	*Interpersonal affiliations or confrontations* e.g. Co-Defense Counsel or Co-Judge
Similar labelling whatever the setting and interaction => No behavioural differences according to the setting	Flexibility of labelling => specific behavioural features of a given interaction/a particular setting e.g. cooperative in mental health instrumental in court

Main results from excerpts 1 & 2

Analysis by footing	Analysis by positioning
Intertwined footings Author/Principal, Animator/Author (Goffman 1987: 154)	Concomitant projection of several positions (van Langenhove & Harré 1999)

Analysis:
• personal deictics
• (in)direct speech in the rendition
• propositional content match
 	
(Merlini & Favaron 2003: 219)
	In-depth discourse analysis, particularly at the pragmatic level
	  e.g. : linguistic politeness (excerpt 1),
	         argumentative stance (excerpt 2)

Discussion

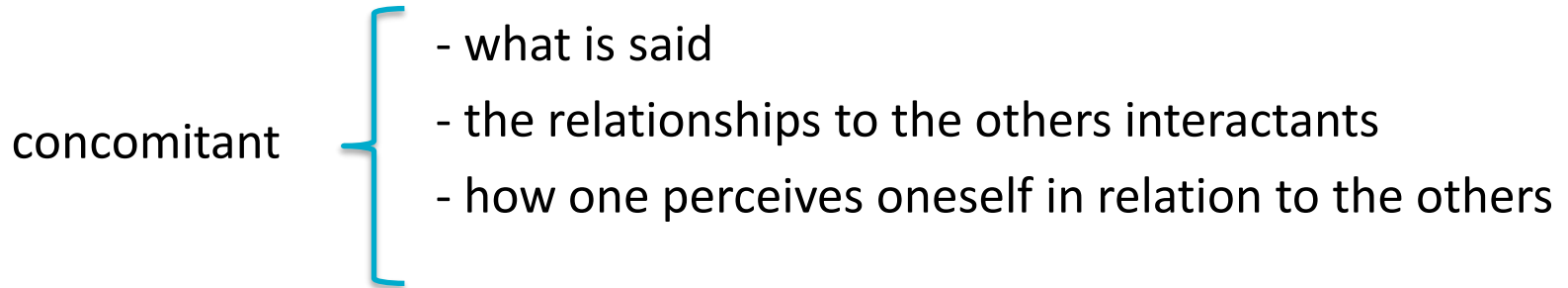Useful conceptual « footing-positioning » apparatus?

Research level:

1. Interpersonal patterns typical of a setting ? Role of the interpreter depending on the setting?

Interprofessional cooperation	Asylum	Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-Provider	Merlini 2009
		Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-investigator, Co-decider	Mason 2005, 2009
	Somatic health	Hetero-positioning as Consultant	Falbo & Niemants 2020
	Mental health	Hetero- & self-positioning Continuum of 13 cooperative positions	Delizée 2018
Promoted or hindered interprofessional cooperation	Healhcare	4 types of self-positioning	René De Cotret et al. 2021
In-Between	Social assistance	Hetero- & self-positioning as Conflict Manager	Baraldi 2018
Instrumentalised affiliations	Court	Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-Judge, Co-Defense Counsel	Defrancq & Verliefde 2017 Delizée 2021

=> Need to analyse larger corpora by positioning

Discussion

2. Inextricably intertwined intertextual & interpersonal dimensions

concomitant
- what is said
- the relationships to the others interactants
- how one perceives oneself in relation to the others

$\Rightarrow$ the interpreter's interactional space depends on the nature of the triadic relationships (cf. René de Cotret et al. 2021: 121)

$\Rightarrow$ necessary to observe the text AND the relationships

to better understand the interpreter's discursive behaviour

Discussion

Training & interprofessional dialogue level:

Flexible labelling of discursive projections

= training tool to show the need to navigate the linguistic, terminological aspects AND the relational aspects of the encounter (Delizée & Michaux 2022)

= interprofessional communication tool to agree on the relevant subjective positions (Delizée et al. 2021; René de Cotret et al. 2021)

For example: Interpreter's main subjective positions in mental health

Optimal self-effacement → **Autonomy & interpersonal involvement**

Linguistic converter

Conveyor of meaning

Patient linguistic assistant

Language consultant

Linguistic agency

Indicator of cultural differences

Cultural consultant

Intercultural mediator

Social worker

Sociocultural agency

Co-recipient of emotional intensity & therapist's support

Relational mediator

Welcomer & patient's support

Patient's spokesperson

Relational agency

Co-manager of memory & history

Bilingual collaborator

Co-reflection

(Delizée 2018)

Conclusion

Positioning Theory **∈** analytical toolbox in Dialogue Interpreting research

IF not misunderstood / misapplied / oversimplified

Intersubjective positioning (= mutual & reflexive process)

≠

Subjective position (= ephemeral outcome of this process)

Subjective position

≠

Footing / posture / stance / role

Interactivity, hetero- & self-positioning, negotiation of positions, intertwined intertextual & interpersonal dimensions to be taken into account

to capture in detail the transient nature of mutual discursive projections throughout an interpreted bilingual interaction

= magnifying analytical lens

Thank you for your attention,

questions

and suggestions

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Appendix: positioning-based studies

Interprofessional cooperation	Asylum	Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-Provider	Merlini 2009	
		Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-investigator, Co-decider	Mason 2005, 2009	Asking confirmation-seeking questions, gaze
	Somatic health	Hetero-positioning as Consultant	Falbo & Niemants 2020)	Sharing of medical & cultural information
	Mental health	Hetero- & self-positioning Continuum of 13 cooperative positions	Delizée 2018	e.g. Language consultant, social worker, relational mediator, etc.
Promoted or hindered interprofessional cooperation	Healhcare	4 types of self-positioning	René De Cotret et al. 2021	Active, reactive, hyperactive, proactive
In-Between	Social assistance	Hetero- & self-positioning as Conflict Manager	Baraldi 2018	Preventing conflict between primary speakers
Instrumentalised affiliations	Court	Hetero- & self-positioning as Co-Judge, Co-Defense Counsel	Delizée 2021 Based on Defrancq & Verliefde 2017	Dichotomous positioning

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