

Abstract - oral presentation

Strand: Research

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

Research objective. This contribution aims to shed light on the methodological relevance of combining the concepts of footing (Goffman 1981; Wadensjö 1998) and positioning (Davies/Harré 1990; Harré/van Langenhove 1999) to investigate the interactional dynamics of an interpreted bilingual encounter.

While the concept of footing is well known in Public Service Interpreting (PSI) research and has proven to be extremely fertile, the concept of positioning – borrowed from the field of social psychology – is still largely unapplied despite its descriptive power to conceptualise interpersonal dynamics (e.g. Baraldi 2018; Mason 2005, 2009; Merlini 2009).

Methodology and data. We will adapt the concept of positioning to make it functional for PSI. Then, to evaluate the relevance of the "footing-positioning" apparatus, we will apply these two analytical lenses to the same discourse data and compare the results. To determine whether the results vary according to the setting, we will analyse excerpts from mental health interpreting and excerpts from court interpreting. Analysis by footing is based on a predefined typology of six conceptual possibilities that particularly illuminates intertextual aspects (Wadensjö 1998: 87-94) and which applies equally to all interactions and settings. Analysis by position aims to dive into the *hic et nunc* of the interaction and implies the labelling of discursive projections as they are produced without any pre-existing typology, which makes it possible to shed light on the specificities of a given interaction and of a particular setting, especially at the interpersonal level.

Results. The analyses show that the concept of position broadens the scope of information provided by the concept of footing alone. The following is particularly highlighted:

- analysis by footing illuminates the interactional game by “zooming in” on the Original statement-Rendered statement pair. Analysis by position “zooms out” to observe the evolution of a position throughout the interaction, finely highlighting the joint negotiation of discursive projections by all the participants;
- footing sheds light on the relationship the receiver/speaker has with what is said (intertextual dimension. e.g. Animator or Author), whereas positioning can shed light on the relationship s/he has with the other interactants (interpersonal dimension. e.g. Relational Mediator or Co-Judge);
- footing does not reveal behavioural differences according to the setting, whereas positioning can. In our data, interpersonal dynamics are cooperative in mental health and instrumental in court.

The proposed conceptual apparatus can therefore help to determine whether there are interpersonal postural patterns typical of a setting, which feeds into the reflection on the role of the interpreter that may vary depending on the setting.

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