

6.11.20202 (15:00) - prof. Jemina Napier (Heriot-Watt university, Edinburgh) – via ZOOM



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Examining the multimodal research trend in dialogue interpreting research

(abstract)

Recent explorations of language use reveal the multimodal nature of language and communication and the contribution of the visual modality to language, and the fact that people draw on a range of resources (such as gesture) in communicative interactions. Gesture is therefore a common denominator between multimodal spoken and signed language research.

The application of a multimodal approach to the analysis of dialogue interpreting (DI) is emerging as a trendy and innovative method to explore the multilayered complexity of interpreter-mediated communication. Signed language interpreting (SLI) researchers, however, have always considered the practice of DI through a multimodal lens due to the visual nature of sign language itself. SLI cannot be examined any other way. Thus although the concept of multimodality and DI research is fairly new, the analytical approach actually is not.

In this presentation I will give an overview of key studies of SLI that clearly demonstrate a multimodal approach, dating back to the seminal case study in 1989 of Cynthia Roy, who explored communication management in a sign language interpreter-mediated interaction. The presentation will also provide an overview of the annotation tool widely used in sign language research that easily enables researchers to annotate and code multimodal data.

The goal in sharing this history would be to: (a) encourage a global community of DI researchers who can work together to examine the nexus of multimodal interpreter-mediated communication; and (b) apply novel approaches derived from SLI research to advance our understanding of newly emerging multimodal language practices.

In detailing various SLI studies and this tool, this presentation will consider the affordances of applying a multimodal approach to the study of DI in any language and suggest how utilizing a multimodal approach can more readily provide a platform for directly comparing signed and spoken language interpreting practice.