
Gesture in spoken and signed-to-spoken language interpreting

Panel

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Gestures have been frequently observed in interpreted discourse, either when spoken language interpreters work in the booth and are not visible, as in (simultaneous) conference interpreting [e.g. 1, 2], or when they are “visible” to the audience, as in community interpreting. Signed language interpreters do not work in a booth, as they need to be visible to the audience when they interpret into the signed language. Depending on the type of service, they are also visible to the audience when interpreting into the spoken language (e.g. in liaison interpreting) or at least to the deaf person who is being interpreted to (e.g. in a conference, the interpreter sits in the first rows of the audience). Regardless of the modality of the source discourse (spoken or signed) and of whether they are seen or not, interpreters do gesture in their spoken target production.

The study of gesture and interpreting can shed light on how interpreters structure their discourse and on how their bodily actions construct meaning. This incipient interdisciplinary approach of researching interpreters’ gestures with their speech may uncover specificities of interpreting that have been overlooked: previous research focused only on sign or speech, but not on the combination of the different semiotic resources available to interpreters. Despite the promising applications that such research may have in the quality of interpreting services and interpreters’ training [2], this topic has largely been overlooked in research. So far, only a few accounts describe gesture in spoken or signed-to-spoken language interpreting [e.g. 1, 2, 3].

This panel aims to contribute to this incipient field of study by gathering scholars who work on gesture in interpreted discourse including different language pairs and modalities. Accepted contributions cover a variety of topics such as gestural alignment, the role of gesture during disfluencies and in the management of cognitive load, the comparison of gesture in interpreted vs. non-interpreted discourse and in simultaneous vs. consecutive interpreting, and the use of gesture in constructed dialogue and reformulation structures. These studies draw on different datasets (elicited and naturalistic interpreted data, non-interpreted data), include one or two modes of interpreting (simultaneous and consecutive) and are recorded in different settings (conference, liaison interpreting, on-site and video remote interpreting). The diversity of the contributions, which is representative of the field of interpreting, will set the scene for the discussion and collaboration between participants of the panel.

References

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- [3] Meurant, Laurence, Aurélie Sinte & Sílvia Gabarró-López. 2022. A multimodal approach to reformulation. Contrastive study of French and French Belgian Sign Language through the productions of speakers, signers and interpreters. *Languages in Contrast* 22(2).