Dissertation Abstracts

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Dissertation abstracts

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In this section, we feature abstracts of recently completed doctoral or master's theses. If you have recently completed a master's or PhD thesis in this field and would like it to be included, please send an abstract of 200–300 words to citjournaleditor@gmail.com. We urge all academic supervisors to encourage their students to submit abstracts of their completed dissertations for inclusion in the next issue of the journal, in order to help disseminate new research relating to interpreter and translator education.

The Interactive Courtroom: The Deaf Defendant Watches How the Speaker Is Identified for Each Turn-at-Talk

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Abstract

The Deaf defendant who stands before the court in the United States charged with a crime and prepared to go to trial cannot hear the individual voices of the judge, attorneys, and English-speaking witnesses. The interpreter must identify who is speaking as a component of the interpretation. Sometimes interpreters strategically identify the speaker for each turn-at-talk but at other times they either do not remember to do so, or are not aware that the speaker identification marker is absent or inaccurate.

A collective case study bounded by speaker identification was used to explore the relationship between teaming model (rotate model or remain model), type of discourse (dialogic or monologic), and onset processing time interval. *Rotate model* and *remain model* are new terms in the field, which I am defining as necessary to the study's central methodology.

Research captured the interpreters using eight major speaker identification markers: assigned (inherent in the remain model), body movement, directional question, indexing, lexical, neutral position, 'NEXT SPEAKER' sign, and raised hand. Results indicate the teaming model, discourse type, and onset processing time interval directly impacted if the interpreters consistently used these markers to identify the speaker for each turn-at-talk.

Keywords: interpreting, speaker identification, legal interpreters, American Sign Language, teaming models, Deaf defendant

Dissertation abstracts

Does Extralinguistic Knowledge Really Matter? An Examination of the Impact of Deaf Interpreter's Personal and Professional Experience on Cancer-Related Translated Texts

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Abstract

Extralinguistic knowledge is defined as knowledge unique to an individual, outside of language, that is retrieved from a person's experiences, education, and work, and which influences interpreters' and translators' work products (Gile, 2009). Possession of extralinguistic knowledge may work in tandem with interpreters' linguistic knowledge when addressing linguistic and lexical challenges in their work. In American Sign Language (ASL), cancer terms and related concepts often have no standardized translation equivalents other than fingerspelling.

This study addressed three questions: (a) How are key cancer terms translated by Deaf interpreters from written English to ASL, and do translations differ based on the existence or lack of personal and professional experiences with cancer? (b) How do these translated terms compare to the same terms expressed directly by a deaf medical professional working in the oncology field? (c) How does a Deaf interpreter's extralinguistic knowledge related to cancer potentially influence deaf consumers' experience with the translated target text products? Translation products from two Deaf interpreters who were self-identified balanced bilinguals, one familiar with cancer and oncology and one not, were analyzed using Fillmore's (1982 & 1985) frame-semantic model. Both interpreters' translation products were compared with a deaf oncologist's narrative text. The deaf oncologist's narrative text, with his extralinguistic knowledge, maintained more form but had flexibility in offering meaning-based explanations of specific cancer concepts. Interview data from both Deaf interpreters were analyzed using Thornberg's (2012) informed grounded theory, confirming that extralinguistic knowledge allowed interpreters to break from form. However, the majority of deaf cancer patients and survivors who participated in focus groups to review the translation products expressed that retention of form implied that the Deaf interpreter without extralinguistic knowledge had the appropriate medical knowledge and oncology-related interpreting experience.

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Dissertation abstracts

An Investigation of Administrators' and Teachers' Perception of Educational Interpreters' Role in K–12 Education

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Abstract

Research on the role space of educational interpreters has historically focused on descriptions of tasks educational interpreters are engaged in during their work day. This case study uses role theory to examine the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the role space of American Sign Language–English educational interpreters.

Through a series of qualitative interviews with 17 state administrators, district administrators, school administrators, general education teachers and teachers of the deaf, and a statewide questionnaire with 18 respondents the perceptions of the role space of educational interpreters in South Carolina are examined. Data from interviews and questionnaire responses are analyzed to determine common themes contributing to role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload for educational interpreters.

Factors contributing to different perceptions among administrators and teachers include the role metaphor ascribed to the educational interpreter, the status of the educational interpreter in the school system, definitions of who is perceived to be responsible for the education of deaf students, and whether the school district is in an urban or rural area.

Findings reveal the perceptions of administrators and teachers in the educational system set the stage for a series of role conflicts and subsequent role overload for educational interpreters. Implications and some concrete future direction to making educational interpreting more effective are discussed.

Keywords: perception, role, educational interpreters

Dissertation abstracts

Domain-Specific Activities in ASL–English Interpreting and Their Relevance to Expertise Development[1]

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Abstract

This exploratory mixed-methods study examined domain-specific activities practiced by expert American Sign Language (ASL)–English interpreters. Qualitative data were collected through interviews for initial identification of domain-specific activities, making it possible to establish a list of 19. Then, quantitative data were analyzed from responses to a questionnaire regarding five characteristics of the identified activities: (a) relevance to improvement, (b) requisite effort, (c) inherent enjoyment, (d) frequency, and (e) competence improvement goal. Of the 19 identified activities, four were rated as highly relevant to improvement of interpreting. Characteristics of the four activities were compared with the professional development activities recommended in the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct (CPC), as well as with related domain-specific activities in other professions. Given their higher ratings, defining characteristics, and similarities to activities in other professions, the four activities identified could result in greater performance gains for ASL–English interpreters than the activities recommended in the CPC. The findings may serve to guide interpreters in selecting professional development activities and enhancing their interpreting performance.

Keywords: domain-specific activities, expert, professional development

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[1] This study has since been published: Adams, K. 2017. Domain-specific activities in ASL–English interpreting and their relevance to expertise development. *Interpreting, 19*(2), 186-208.