
*Coordinating Participation in Dialogue Interpreting*, edited by Claudio Baraldi and Laura Gavioli, is composed of an introduction and twelve chapters. The volume includes both empirical studies in diverse social, medical and legal contexts as well as theoretical and analytical contributions focused on the area of interpreting-mediated interactions. What distinguishes this book from previous publications and studies is the concept of coordination. This volume not only describes issues of coordination in the diverse settings that an interpreter mediates, but it also raises the question as to whether or not the role of the interpreter in mediated interactions should be redefined.

The book begins with an Introduction by the co-editors offering an overview of the three concepts guiding the focus of the book: coordination, mediation and participation. Organized into four different sections, the book first explores the concept of coordination, highlighting the complexity that reflexive coordination may present; the second section discusses the notion of mediation and participation at both a professional and an interactional level; the third section looks at how participation relates to coordination and mediation, and at the ways in which the various chapters in this volume address the issue; and the final section offers an organizational overview as well as transcription method notes that were implemented to present the data.

The first chapter, entitled “Interpreting or interfering?” by Helen Tebble, discusses the growing need for community interpreting and the lack of accessible and high-quality educational programs for this unique form of interpreting. It examines the ethics of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) in order to reveal its operational intentions, which allow the interpreter to coordinate the metalingual function of the interpreted dialogue. The AUSIT Code of Practice suggests the role that the interpreter is allowed to take within the consultation. The metalingual function of the interpreted dialogue is also a matter of interpreter’s coordination, a salient feature when there is a need to deal with errors or clarify through the strategy of self-correction. This strategy can be used in both monolingual and interpreted dialogues to clarify speakers’ meanings.

Franz Pöchhacker, in “Interpreting Participation: Conceptual Analysis and Illustration of the Interpreter’s Role in Interaction,” explores participatory roles and ethics assisting the interaction and which types of coordination add to a successful and professionally-mediated interaction. From both a theoretical and an empirical perspective, the author looks at the notion of participation in dialogue interpreting. Beginning with a theoretical discussion of the existing analytical and descriptive frameworks, it then applies
the theoretical discussion to examples of authentic interpreter-mediated encounters in institutional settings. This illustrates how interpreters participate in the interaction and, in so doing, promote participation; it also highlights the importance of participants’ linguistic production and comprehension skills. Pöchhacker suggests a need to include a cognitive perspective to the sociolinguistic analysis of participation in discourse.

The third chapter written by Francesco Straniero Sergio is an empirical study presenting data from CorIT (Television Interpreting Corpus) made up of 1500 interpreted renditions. Entitled “You Are Not Too Funny: Challenging the Role of the Interpreter on Italian Talk Shows,” the chapter shows how entertainment-oriented and host-controlled types of interactions involve greater visibility and participation of the interpreter in comparison to other institutional contexts. In addition, it explores the concept of controlling participation, repair, face-work, and participation shifts in interpreter-mediated talk shows. Sergio investigates the notion of coordinating participation in sequential contexts in which the host or the guest comments, corrects, questions, and/or rejects the interpreter’s choices in the delivery. Different repair trajectories are also described to distinguish the various types of corrections that may appear during the interaction, such as requests for clarification. The study aims to illustrate the participation shift that occurs during repair and how it is managed by the interpreter. Moreover, it discusses how different roles are taken on during the interaction.

Bernd Meyer’s “Ad-hoc Interpreting for Partially Language-Proficient Patients: Participation in Multilingual Constellations” investigates the notion of language barrier in communication with migration-background patients. He presents data from two case studies on ad hoc-interpreting for Turkish and Portuguese patients in hospitals in Hamburg, Germany. Patients of migration background tend to have limited language proficiency therefore requiring an interpreter to communicate with the medical staff. The study demonstrates interpreter participation in these settings and how it is influenced by the specific multilingual competencies of the patients. In these complex interactions, interpreters need to take on and adapt to other roles depending on the patient’s linguistic means. The author proposes that this distinct type of interaction be integrated into interpreter training curricula.

In “Code-Switching and Coordination in Interpreter-Mediated Interaction,” Laurie Anderson discusses and compares code-switching by lay participants and institutional representatives. She presents data collected in legal and healthcare settings in Northern Italy in English and Italian. She also explores the situation of migrants from Ghana and Nigeria who use a different language from their native tongue, in mediated encounters on the part of primary parties who temporarily switch from their own language to that of their interlocutor. Anderson stresses the need to create a collaborative
relationship in order to successfully diagnose and treat patients. Theoretically, the study highlights the need to elaborate models for the analysis of mediated encounters in institutional contexts that take into account the other languages being used. Practically, the findings have two main implications for the provision of mediation and interpreting services in migratory contexts: first, the need to guarantee the presence of an interpreter/mediator in both legal and healthcare settings; and second, the need to use a different perspective to discuss the interpreter’s role given the different levels of interpreter participation.

In “Ad hoc-Interpreting in Multilingual Work Meeting: Who Translates for Whom?” Véronique Traverso explores in depth non-professional/trained interpreters who participate in local translation events, and examines the organization of sequencing and participation in multilingual work meetings. Through data collected during two conferences of the ‘Hammam project,’ Traverso looks at how ad hoc interpreters handle these multilingual work interactions by identifying the practices and the way in which they deal with the situation at hand.

Based on video recordings of immigration interviews in Germany, Ian Mason examines the gaze shifts in his chapter entitled “Gaze, Positioning and Identity in Interpreter-Mediated Dialogues.” Mason illustrates that gaze not only functions in signaling attention and coordinating turns to talk, but it also regulates patterns of participation. He argues that the interplay of gaze patterns is very closely interlinked with role, status, identity and power.

In Chapter eight, Laura Gavioli’s contribution entitled “Minimal Responses in Interpreter-Mediated Medical Talk” looks at minimal responses produced by mediators in healthcare interactions. Her contribution focuses on items such as ‘yes’, ‘no’, echoes, other-completions and partial repetitions that have an important role in both regulating turn taking and following certain interactional goals. The author uses data from 150 interactions with English-speaking patients, Italian doctors, midwives, nurses and bilingual mediators. Gavioli reviews the potential comprehensibility of minimal responses across languages and their role in coordinating bilingual talk, as well as how minimal responses work to draw out and to create the translatability of their contributions. In addition, she reinforces the importance in the way in which interpreter-mediators in Italy handle interactions with bilingual conversations and in making patients feel accepted by the institutions.

Daniela Zorzi’s “Mediating Assessments in Healthcare Setting” discusses assessments in encounters between West African migrants, representatives of institutions, and mediating interpreters. The author studies approximately eighty interpreter-mediated health encounters in Italy in which English was used for interpreting. The aim of the study is to demonstrate the ways in which different identities of the mediator are made relevant at different
moments of healthcare encounters. It argues that in mediated encounters, the various social functions of the interpreter may be important in determining the modalities of participation in that interaction. The study looks at mediator’s reactions to assessments by doctors both in dyadic and triadic sequences. It illustrates how providing assessment not only implies having a point of view but also the right to produce it.

Claudia V. Angelelli’s “Challenges in Interpreters’ Coordination of the Construction of Pain” discusses how pain – more specifically pain intensity based on pain-rating scales – is perceived and communicated by different cultural communities. The chapter examines the interaction of healthcare providers and patient via interviews from a public hospital in California. The goal of the study is to show the complex interaction and issues that arise between Spanish-speaking patient and English-speaking providers as they communicate about pain. The author argues that to provide patient-centered care, providers need to be culturally sensitive and also to understand how to work with interpreters effectively and efficiently. This study stresses the need to revisit theoretical constructs on which the education of medical interpreters is based, and advocates the use of a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach to interpreter education along with empirically-based materials.

In “Cultural Brokerage and Overcoming Communication Barriers: A Case Study from Aphasia,” Claire Penn and Jennifer Watermeyer explore the concept of cultural brokerage in an interpreter-mediated clinical setting through the lens of aphasia by focusing on a case study between an isiZulu-speaking patient and English-speaking clinicians at the University Speech Therapy Clinic in South Africa. In this situation, the interpreter acts as a language translator and also as a bridge across different cultures during the interaction. The study reveals the importance of the interpreter’s cultural role in the medical context due to patients’ different cultural beliefs or understanding of their illness. The authors state that such beliefs can have a potential impact on patients’ health and treatment; they argue that healthcare professionals need to understand their patients’ cultural beliefs in order to provide them with the most effective care.

The closing chapter by Claudio Baraldi, “Interpreting as Dialogic Mediation: The Relevance of Expansions,” presents Arabic-speaking patients navigating Italian health services to show the mediators’ behaviors in sequences of dialogic mediation. The data comes from forty interpreter-mediated interactions with Arabic-speaking patients, doctors, and three bilingual (Arabic-Italian) intercultural mediators. The author concludes that the cultural condition of dialogic mediation is personalization, which is important in reflecting cultural differences and intercultural dimensions of mediation. Speaking different languages with the assistance of a mediator allows for telling personal stories, identifying and using personal agency,
and receiving personal attention. Essentially, it offers the chance to create a hybrid experience in which personal and cultural voices are involved, as well as to promote sensitivity and trust within the interaction.

Taken together, these chapters show the importance and complexity of the interpreters’ profession and of the social, cultural and cognitive competencies required by those who work regularly with interpreters. This volume stresses that coordination, mediation and participation are the result of interactional negotiation of activities through which participants make their understanding and views clear and observable to others. All authors encourage both professional training of interpreters and awareness on the part of the institutional providers who work with them. In addition, the authors offer paths to further research which include: additional studies of how reflexive coordination is achieved in interpreter-mediated settings; a more comprehensive understanding of how collaboration can play a role between the interpreter and the institutional provider through coordination; a move towards expanding a classification of non-verbal, pseudo-verbal and verbal actions that improve forms of interpreting-mediation; and research on how interpreters influence the system and its cultural practices.

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