

Editorial

Since the publication of Wadensjö's *Interpreting as Interaction* (1998), research conducted on real-life interpreter-mediated encounters has significantly contributed to recent advances in Dialogue Interpreting (DI) research. Availability of authentic DI data is however limited, due to technical and methodological concerns, such as accessing data and getting permission to use them for scientific purposes (Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012); conversational phenomena characterising dialogue-like data which can hardly be annotated or extracted automatically (Angermeyer *et al.* 2012); and time-consuming tasks like data collection and transcription, ultimately influencing analysis (Niemants 2012). Despite the current lack of DI large corpora, a number of independently conducted investigations are providing substantial evidence of *how* interpreters translate and of the reasons *why* they do it that way, showing the gap between “professional ideology” and “professional practice” (Merlini 2015). This gap, in some cases, turned into all-out prejudice hampering the development of a common ground and a coherent profession, and relegating DI to an ancillary – if not inferior – position with respect to conference interpreting. We are confident that there is nothing inferior in e.g. helping healthcare professionals to take care of patients in hospitals, or helping judges to impart justice on suspects in courts, since, as Fiola (2004: 122-123) rightly acknowledges, “l’interprète n’est pas professionnel de la santé, mais il aide à soigner; il n’est pas juge, mais il aide à rendre la justice”; and “la perception positive ou négative de son travail, de sa fonction et de son image publique dépend de la nature de son intervention”. As yet only few comprehensive works are overtly devoted to Dialogue Interpreting (e.g. Mason 1999, 2001; Baraldi/Ga-

violi 2012; Davitti/Pasquandrea 2014a; Niemants 2015) and most of the debate is currently fed by short focused discussions trying to cross research-to-practice boundaries. Our aim in putting these twelve papers together in a dedicated Issue was to explore the implications of interpreters' **participation** in a wide range of **settings**, and since the need for data-based reflections is still high, the volume is to be intended as a contribution to this field of inquiry.

The first eight papers analyse interactional aspects of real-life interpreter-mediated communication. Nartowska focuses on the degree of power court interpreters may or may not exert while interpreting during criminal proceedings. Using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach the author highlights how perception by clients of the interpreter's role may often appear confused and conflicting, ranging from the traditional invisibility principle to the idea of interpreters as intermediaries between languages and cultures, and even active (and visible!) partners in communication. Gallez too describes an authentic interpreter-mediated interaction in the legal setting, but focuses on impoliteness in participants' talk and the impact of interpreting strategies on the interactional dynamics of court examinations. By analysing a Flemish-French criminal hearing recorded in a Belgian court, she observes that interpreters are pivotal elements in coordinating primary speakers' face-work, as well as in the management of their power relations and mutual positioning. Baraldi's contribution focuses on interpreter-mediated interactions in a migrant-support centre, involving Italian social workers and immigrants applying for residence permits and family reunions. He crucially refers to interpreters as 'mediators' throughout the whole paper (title included) and maintains that only interpreting *as* language mediation effectively deals with possible clashes between immigrants' personal narratives and social workers' depersonalised discursive practices. Gavioli's study too deals with the problem of interpreting what is "behind the turns", further elaborating on the controversial question of how far interpreters should engage in dealing with implicit issues that they know about, making them explicit. She shows that in the interpreter-mediated guided tours she analyses this is largely a matter of shared responsibility and what is added is systematically negotiated, through some interactional practices, with the guides. Following this line of reasoning, which points to the significance of an active participation of the interpreter in the interaction, reference must be made to the interpreter's physical presence in – or absence from – the communication stage. Sandrelli conducts a case study on a small corpus of webcast interpreter-mediated football press conferences organised for the official presentation of new players with limited proficiency in the language of the country they play in. The sheer feasibility of the interpreters' task is here greatly dependent on their positioning on the stage, influencing their ability to efficiently deliver their translation and possibility of exerting any degree of coordination on the interaction. The physical distribution of interlocutors and interpreters in space, and its significance for successful communication, is also the subject of Vargas-Urpi's paper. Difficulties in this case arise because of the composite configuration of multi-party encounters in educational contexts involving teachers, parents, children and interpreters. Triangulating field notes, transcripts and interviews, the author investigates to what extent participants' empowerment depends on the interpreter's decisions, and observes an interpreters' tendency to favour the 'institution', often excluding parents and children from the exchange and thus increasing the asymmetry between

them and the teacher. The issue of asymmetry is particularly relevant in healthcare settings, as medical consultations are characterised, at a global level, by a built-in asymmetry of both knowledge and topic; however, participants share a common goal (the wellbeing of the patient), which allows for a greater scope for negotiation at local level. Farini's paper focuses on the treatment of emotions and the shift from scientific objectivity and emotional detachment to explicit display of affectivity in a series of interpreter-mediated medical encounters, discussing examples of interpreters' choices which either exclude or promote patients' emotions during the interaction. On the basis of these data, he looks at the repercussions different interpreters' choices have on the provision of healthcare: when opting for an overt display of affectivity, interpreters contribute to accomplish patient-centred, emotion-sensitive healthcare. Although previous studies (Baraldi/Gavioli 2007; Merlini/Favaron 2009) have shown that interpreters' affiliation with patients' expressions of concerns may not always favour a successful outcome of the medical consultation, Merlini and Gatti's investigation seems to corroborate Farini's results. The authors put forward an innovative trifocal methodological model for their analysis, moving from empathy as the actualised object of the conversational process to the interpreter as the *subject* of the empathic experience. Empathic behaviour is broken down into three main components, whose incidence suggests that, despite a lingering bias against an empathic interpreting conduct, empathy proves beneficial for professional relations in healthcare encounters.

Additionally, this Issue includes two analyses of non-professional interpreting. We share the authors' view that such contributions can feed the discussion on Natural Translation and shed light on a common yet controversial and still under-investigated type of DI, where the construction of the interpreter role is based on actual interaction rather than on acquired norms. Ticca and Traverso analyse a set of video-recorded medical consultations where interpreting is provided by family members or other bilinguals with no specific training in DI. Using the micro-analytical lens of Conversation Analysis, they focus on the interpreter's correction of patients' responses to doctors, and their relevance in the interaction. Interpreters intervene to specify the patients' response, often in an attempt to provide the physician with a precise quantitative figure. In her study on non-professional interpreters in prison settings, Martínez-Gómez also deals with interpreters' participation, including perception of the latter by users and interpreters themselves. She moves from the assumption that the notion of interpreter's invisibility is traditionally linked to the related perception of moral correctness rather than to empirical evidence. Her survey-based study indicates that interpreters tend to perceive themselves as visible only when they are explicitly managing the turn-taking system and actively facilitating trust and mutual respect between interlocutors.

Despite the growing attention to the training of dialogue interpreters, a lot remains to be done in order to "create greater connection between interpreting research and pedagogy" (Davitti/Pasquandrea 2014b: 374), and the last two papers tentatively try to make the link. Despite their geographical distance and their different targets, the authors appear to share the assumption that interpreting is co-constructed by all participants, while trying to answer the same basic question: Whom is DI research relevant for? Unsurprisingly, the answer will be

that research can be applied to the training of interpretation users and providers, whose identification, however, is hardly straightforward, given the wide label we deliberately use here. Such is the background against which Salaets and De Pooter interviewed ten members of the Belgian Waterway Police and five legal interpreters to investigate how they cooperate in facing multilingual issues in ports. The authors observe whether and how existing legal, professional and training tools are actually applied in real-life situations. Results show that cooperation is hampered by the non-user-friendly registers used to recruit interpreters, the inadequate training offered to police members, and their tendency to prefer *ad hoc* interpreters they select from self-made lists. In this respect, we could not agree more with Davitti/Pasquandrea (2014b: 375) that interpreters' education is currently suffering the clash between "the need to impart knowledge in a clear, easy-to-digest manner" and "the need to [...] teach interpreters to adopt a more [...] critical approach to what happens during [...] interaction". Viljanmaa's contribution tries to find a compromise between these two extremes interviewing teachers and students of a BA level DI course in Finland, where traditional role-plays simulating real-life situations are used in conjunction with a semi-remote method involving simultaneous-interpreting booths. The author's findings indicate that double-deck methods may prove useful to provide students with additional practice of several of the basic (sub)skills necessary in DI.

But for training to be close to real-life practice we have depicted above, where one of the crucial skills is undoubtedly that of coping with translation and coordination while being dependent on the other participants, a lot has still to be done. Our hope is that the selected papers will contribute to the growing body of empirical research on DI, and to the ongoing reflection on how descriptive studies could inform and possibly improve interpreters' professional practice and training.

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