
Characteristics of an Interpreted Situation with Multiple Participants: Implications for Pedagogy

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Abstract

By examining a naturalistic interpreted situation with a number of participants, this paper identifies and considers the distinctiveness of such a context. With an increased number of participants, the interaction becomes highly complex, and an interpreter is required to undertake functions that may be considered additional to or different from an interpreter-mediated interaction with two primary interlocutors. Such additional tasks consist of the management of information, including reporting and summarizing, and monitoring the participants' information needs. In order to analyze the complex nature of the interaction, the notion of *footing* is employed as a theoretical framework. These findings have important implications for interpreting pedagogy. Recommendations for interpreter education and training include the promotion of students' awareness of similarly complex interpreting situations.

Keywords: interpreting; multiparty interpreting; footing; third person; reporting; pedagogy

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1. Introduction

Thanks to the recent advancement of research in interpreting studies, we have come to understand the complex nature of interpreter-mediated interactions, in depth and from various perspectives. Research efforts to date, however, have been directed mostly towards the investigation of the so-called triadic (Mason, 2001) interaction in which two primary interlocutors and an interpreter are involved, regardless of the language combination or language modality. In this study, I discuss some of the characteristics of a spontaneous interpreting situation in which a multiple number of people participated and show the added complexities. I refer to such an interaction as a *multiparty interpreting situation* in this paper. Although “party” may imply a certain affiliation of participants to a particular role (e.g., a party for “pro” or “con,” or “interpreter” and “other-party”; Bruxelles & Kerbrat-Orecchinoni, 2004), I use the word simply to indicate a multiple number of participants. Added complexities in such an interaction may result in additional and difficult tasks for the interpreter, as shown in this paper. These findings pose significant implications for the education and training of future interpreters, which is discussed in the latter part of the paper.

1.1. Theoretical framework

In order to analyze the dynamic and complex interpreting situation, Goffman’s (1981) notion of *footing* is utilized. Footing is understood as a participant’s alignment or stance vis-à-vis other participants as a listener and/or speaker. According to Goffman, people constantly change and adjust their footing during interactions. The notion has been applied widely in interpreting studies. For example, a study by Cambridge (1999) analyzed simulated face-to-face medical interviews by using the notion of footing. The study showed that the untrained interpreters’ use of the third person in their renditions resulted in a shift in footing, which, in turn, caused miscommunication. Sergio (1999) examined interpreters’ footing, particularly as a speaker, in a televised talk show. He concluded that the interpreter in such a situation participated actively in the interaction, including participation in turn-taking and the negotiation of meaning. Wadensjö (1998) also highlighted the nature of complex involvement of the interpreter in interaction, drawing upon the notion of footing. The study by Metzger (1999) investigated a signed language interpreter’s footing during a pediatric interview, which revealed that the footing changed when a shift in the use of pronominal reference occurs. All these studies confirm that an interpreter is involved in the interaction in a highly complex way by changing his/her footing constantly. At the same time, the studies also clearly indicated that an interpreter’s footing has a significant effect on the interaction as a whole.

This study is an attempt to apply the notion of footing to a multiparty interaction. In an interpreter-mediated interaction with two primary interlocutors (e.g., “A” and “B”), an interpreter speaks on behalf of the primary interlocutor. In other words, the interpreter serves as a “spokesperson” of the previous speaker. For example, when “A” speaks, the interpreter conveys “A’s” message in a different language so that “B” can understand it.

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This is characterized by his/her usage of “I,” the first person pronoun. By doing so, both primary interlocutors can maintain the conversational floor without confusion. That is to say, “A” remains as the (original) speaker, while “B” is the addressee, despite the fact that it is the interpreter who speaks in the language which “B” understands. Here, the footing, or the alignment between the participants, is considered to be rather steady. Of course, as many studies have revealed to date (Wadensjö, 1998), actual interpreting situations are much more complex. However, the pedagogy for consecutive interpreting, and in particular, dialogue interpreting (or short consecutive interpreting), is based largely on this simple model. That is to say, the main assumption appears to be that an interpreter is required to, and also able to, provide turn-by-turn interpretation. In such a model, as discussed above, the use of the first person pronoun is considered to be imperative.

When the notion of footing is applied to a multiparty interaction in general, that is, a non-interpreting situation, it becomes much more complex. As Goffman (1981) points out, a speaker may speak to a particular person or group rather than targeting a message to all participants. In that case, not all participants are equal in terms of the footing because the alignment of the particular addressee with the speaker would be different from that of the non-addressee participants. Furthermore, there may be parallel or “local” conversations within the whole group, in which case there are multiple hearer-listener alignments. Therefore, the footing can be quite multifaceted in multiparty interaction. Once a multiparty situation becomes an interpreter-mediated interaction, it is not difficult to envisage that a further complexity is added, especially in terms of the footing and the temporal organization of talking and turn-taking. At the very least, there are likely to be two distinctive groups, based on the language backgrounds of the participants. In addition, there is an interpreter who mediates between these two groups. In this paper, therefore, this seemingly complex multiparty interaction is investigated by employing the notion of footing. In light of the previous research findings investigating dialogue situations with two primary interlocutors, one can hypothesize that the footing of the interpreter in this study also shifts from time to time. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the nature of the shift in a multiparty situation and to consider its implications for pedagogy.

1.2. The data

This is a qualitative case study, based on a naturalistic business interaction that was audio-recorded in Australia. The meeting took place in the boardroom of a Japanese subsidiary company. This is a weekly executive meeting where top managers of various sections meet to discuss corporate matters. Since the management team consists of both English and Japanese speaking personnel, the meeting has always been interpreted. This time, the topic concerned the corporate financial situation. The meeting was chaired by the CEO (J1). There were eight participants: two native English speakers who are Australians (A1 and A2), five native Japanese speakers (J1_J5), and the interpreter (I). The meeting lasted for approximately an hour; this paper examines the first half of the recorded data. The recording was done by the interpreter, using a small hand-held digital audio-recorder; the researcher was not present at the meeting. An audio-recording was chosen rather than video-recording in order to minimize disruption to the interaction (Wadensjö, 2001), as well as to respond to the participants’ preferences. Although the participants were aware that the interaction was being audio-recorded for the purpose of research, no concrete research questions were given to them. A few hours after the recording was completed, this researcher conducted a stimulated-recall interview (Gass & Mackey, 2000) with the interpreter, in an attempt to understand the reasons for the interpreter’s particular behavioral choices. In addition, this process proved to be helpful in understanding the interaction itself, because the recording was limited to audio data, thus lacking a visual perspective. In the interview, the actual recording was replayed, and the researcher asked specific questions at various points. Alternatively, the interpreter explained what was occurring at the time of recording. In this paper, both the recorded interpreting discourse and the recorded stimulated-recall interview are used as data. Both situations were fully transcribed. The transcriptions were then categorized according to topics for further in-depth analysis, and illustrative examples were selected for this paper.

The interpreter in this situation was a female Japanese native speaker who was employed by the company for a short period of time as a temporary staff member. She was professionally trained and has a postgraduate degree in interpreting and translation. She is also accredited as a professional interpreter and translator by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), which is nation-wide and the sole accreditation body in Australia.

2. Characteristics of multiparty interpreting situation

2.1. Diversity of participants

In any multiparty situation, the background of each participant is never the same. The interpreting situation examined here is not an exception. In particular, two aspects are relevant in the situation: the participants' language backgrounds and the participants' relative positions within the corporate structure. The interpreter clearly evaluates each Japanese speaker's level of English proficiency, as evidenced in the stimulated-recall interviews. This implies that she often determines her interpreting strategy based on the requirements of a particular person. In addition, the interpreter explicitly states that the main person for whom she provides interpreting is J1, the CEO of the company. Needless to say, this relates to the fact that the CEO's position is relatively higher than that of any other participant. This aspect is important because it suggests that the interpreter in this study does not treat all participants equally. In fact, it may be unavoidable to have the *main* participant for whom interpreting is primarily provided, given the fact that it is extremely difficult to provide interpreting to all seven participants equally in the complex interaction discussed in the following section. This further suggests that the interpreter's footing, or alignment, with J1 may be quite different from that with other participants. The diversity of participants described here directly relates to the different needs of the participants.

2.2. Interaction without the help of the interpreter

As mentioned above, the background of the participants in the interaction examined here is diverse, including their language backgrounds. While some participants are quite competent in their non-native language (i.e., English), others are not. When a Japanese participant has a good command of English, interpretation may not be required. In Excerpt 1, the communication is successfully achieved between J1 and two native English speakers without the help of the interpreter. (Transcription conventions can be seen in the Appendix).

Excerpt 1

- 85 A2 Ok, so my suggestion is it, we treat this one as a bonus
86 A1 You think we leave out for the moment
87 A2 Anything that X [name] can achieve is safety margin
88 I (h)
89 J1 Good idea
90 A2 What do you think
91 J1 Yea, good idea, I think, um

Discourse that remains uninterpreted can also occur in a dialogue interpreting situation with two primary interlocutors (Mason, 1999). However, in that case, an interpreter does not have to take any further action. That is to say, the interpreter is not required to interpret the English conversation between two people into another language if the two primary interlocutors can successfully communicate. Rather, it is considered awkward if s/he provides interpretation. However, in the above excerpt, the interpreter may have to convey the discourse in Japanese, depending on the situation. This is because participants other than J1 may not have understood what was discussed. In fact, in the turn that follows (Turn 93), the interpreter summarized and reported the whole discourse in Japanese. Here, from the perspective of the participants other than the interpreter, their footing is rather multidimensional. There are countless possibilities when it comes to the pattern of the listener-speaker alignments. In this case, J1 aligns with A1 and A2 directly, as a listener and speaker, without the help of the interpreter. The other participants, apart from these three (i.e., the four Japanese native speakers), are either a listener to the discourse presented by the J1, A1, and A2_ or simply an observer of the interaction between the three, without knowing what is being said. When the interpreter's footing is considered, she is certainly relating to the conversations as a listener, but she does not participate as a "spokesperson" after each turn, using the first person

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pronoun. When she presents a summary of multiple previous utterances, her footing changes to that of a “reporter.”

2.3. *Timing difficulties and management of information caused by conversations between speakers of the same language*

The following excerpt is an extended discussion between two English speakers. Similar cases, where same-language speakers talk directly, can be found elsewhere in the data. For example, just before this segment, after J1 speaks in Turn 40, J3 questions J1 directly in Japanese; J1’s response follows in Turn 42. In Excerpt 2, it is clearly shown that it is difficult for the interpreter to start her rendition, despite the effort of the chairperson (J1) to coordinate the interaction.

Excerpt 2

- 51 A2 A new budget, we, we put nearly six hundred thousand dollars, so from April to March next year, we everybody’s gonna be in the plant making sure it happens, we have got more than two times the budget for last, for the current condition, where many travels happen to Japan, so it’s just a crazy story, so budget is wrong
- 52 A1 So, yea, so we agree, I guess there’s a bit of a, bit of opportunity in, as I said, I just put two hundred against that, um five hundred against the Axxx, that gives me six point one five, now as you say, the big issue in there is that still a million dollars of Kxxxx, which I guess is what we are talking about here
- 53 J1 Sorry
- 54 A2 With the sales reduction still, sales price increase still there or not
- 55 A1 No, it’s been taken out
- 56 A2 You already getting the six million
- 57 A1 Yea, this, that’s what I said, this is my, my calculation, we’re sitting here at the moment, this five point two,
- 58 A2 We really need a whiteboard
- 59 A1 Yea, where is it, now, this, can jump on, I’ll put all up there (0.9)
- 60 J1 nanka, _, _XXX to, // shuccho to //
(something [like], A, Axxx and // business trip and, //)
- 61 I _XXX ga 500k nano de //
(Axxx is 500K so, //)
- 62 J1 UN,
(Okay)
- 63 I 50-man de, toraberu, ano, shuccho ni taishite, e, kore, tabun, ano, herasu gaku o itteru to omoun desu kedo, ai, aiXXX ga 500 k_ de, toraberu ga 200 k_ de, _b_taimu, zangyo ga 1.2 mirion, de, seringupura, seringu, hanbai-kakaku no inkur_su ga 2 mirion, de, ato, kXXXX de 1 mirion to osshatteta no kana
(500 thousand, and, travel, well, against business travel, um, probably this, [I] think [they are] talking about the amount to be decreased, ai, Axxx is 500K, travelling is 200K, and, overtime, overtime is 1.2 million, and, sellig- pra, selling, sales price increase is 2 million, and, well, 1 million from Kxxxx, [is that what they’ve] said)

The difficulty of stopping the conversation is evidenced by J1’s utterance, “Sorry,” in Turn 53 when he tries to terminate their talk, but without success. In the stimulated-recall interview, it was confirmed that J1 attempted to help the interpreter so that she could start interpreting. However, A1 and A2 did not stop, even when J1, as the

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chairperson of the meeting, attempted to intervene. Then, in Turn 62, J1 prompted the interpreter to provide information regarding the content of the conversation between A1 and A2. According to the interpreter's explanation in the stimulated-recall interview, she was able to start conveying the message here, because A1 and A2 finally stopped, in order to fetch a whiteboard.

This excerpt clearly highlights that management of the communication flow between speakers of the same language, or *interaction oriented coordination* (Wadensjö, 1998, p.110), can be extremely challenging, particularly when there are multiple participants. Because of this, while A1 and A2 alternatively take the conversational floor as listener and speaker, all other participants observe the two, most probably without understanding, which is reflected in J1's prompt in Turn 62. The interpreter's footing, on the other hand, is considered to be that of an active listener in this segment. In a later part of the interaction (Turn 158), even when the interpreter is successful in commencing interpreting, A1 and A2 started their discussion, again, in English. Therefore, the interpreter needs to monitor what they are talking about while she also provides rendition. That is to say, the interpreter is a speaker, and at the same time, a listener.

Another important issue in relation to the conversation between the same language speakers is the management of information. When the interpreter regards a certain conversation as being local and not relevant for the entire group, she may not convey that message in the other language (Wadensjö, 1998). The interpreter, for example, reports in the stimulated-recall interview that the reason for not interpreting a certain segment as follows: "... around that part, foreigners [Australians] were having a chat together, and the content wasn't particularly important." Therefore, she did not convey the local conversation between the two English speakers. In other words, she considered the segment as *subordinate communication* (Goffman, 1981) which is not relevant for the overall interaction. On such an occasion, while the two English speakers align as a speaker/addressee, others participate only as an observer/listener. The interpreter, on the other hand, participated as a listener initially and made a decision of non-rendition. The footing, therefore, is quite intricate. The management of information can also be seen in the context of a summary presentation. It is clear that the interpreter's rendition in Turn 63 in Excerpt 2, above, is very condensed. That is to say, when rendering the previous multiple turns in the form of reporting, the interpreter actually chooses the essential information and then presents a summary rather than the full interpretation. This strategy of managing information is found throughout the recorded discourse. This is considered to be related also to temporal constraints. For example, in the stimulated-recall interview, the interpreter repeatedly emphasized the importance of presenting a concise rendition in meetings where only limited time was allocated.

Although they are not discussed in detail here, there are other cases in which the interpreter cannot interpret due to the complex sequence and overlapping of turns. For example, after A2's utterance (in English) in Turn 176, the interpreter attempts to interpret, but A2 does not stop. Then, J1 started his utterance in Japanese right after A2 finished his turn. This is perhaps because J1 was able to understand A2's utterance without it being interpreted. Therefore, the interpreter was not able to convey A2's message in Japanese for the other Japanese native speakers. One can see that it is extremely difficult for the interpreter to accurately provide interpreting for all participants equally in the complex interactions described here.

3. The required functions of the interpreter in the multiparty situation

3.1. Reporting and footing

Unlike dialogue interpreting situations with two primary interlocutors, an interpreter's functions can be drastically different in multiparty situations. In order to cope with the cases discussed in the above section, the interpreter in this study was required to report the previous multiple turns in one rendition. As we have seen above, there are occasions when participants spoke directly, without the help of the interpreter. When this happens, it is considered appropriate for the interpreter to explain what they were talking about for those other participants who may not have understood the content of communication. The same thing can be said when there are conversations between the participants with the same language background, just as the case quoted in Excerpt 2. However, in doing so,

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the interpreter's function, as well as her footing, changes dramatically. When an interpreter renders interpretation using the first person pronoun "I" in a triadic interaction, his/her function is that of a spokesperson. When s/he is required to report the content of multiple turns in the form of reporting or summarizing, however, the interpreter is no longer a spokesperson. The interpreter now assumes the role of a reporter, by shifting footing to become a narrator or storyteller, and embeds the actors in her rendition (Goffman, 1981). More important, the use of the first person becomes irrelevant in fulfilling this role. In such a situation, it is imperative that the interpreter indicates who said what, using appropriate nouns (i.e., names) or pronouns. This is in line with Metzger's (2005) assertion that source attribution is critical, especially in the interaction that involves more than two people.

3.2. Use of subject reference in the rendition and effects on footing

One may consider it straightforward to report using correct nouns and pronouns. However, because of the number of participants, the options of choices expand significantly. In an extremely simplistic scenario of a two-party conversation, "I" and "you" may be sufficient to address each other. However, even the first person pronoun now has the option of plural and singular forms. Therefore, unless an interpreter is careful, a shift may occur through the choice of an inappropriate subject/pronoun. In the example in Excerpt 3, J3's utterance in Turn 174 clearly indicates that it is his own opinion. However, the interpreter chose the plural pronoun form, and because of this, J3's footing as the owner of the opinion is somehow shifted. That is to say, the statement now sounds like a generally shared view rather than J3's own opinion.

Excerpt 3

- 174 J3 dakara, kaisha no porish_ toshite s_desuyotte iu f_na, ano, kaisha no tachiba deno meigen ga hitsuy_ dato, boku wa omoimasu
(So, it is as the policy of the company, something like, well, a clear indication as a corporate stance is required, [that's what] I believe)
- 175 I So, if **we** want to carry out this, **we** need to clearly um, specify it as **our** company policy

The interpreter's rendition in Excerpt 4, also indicates a slight shift, this time by the use of two different words for the same referent.

Excerpt 4

- 218 J1 s_iu imide ne, ima ga hij_ni j_y_na jikidato omoimasu to, sorewa nazeka to iuto, atarashii menb_ ga dondon haitte kite, de, imamade no menb_ ga, imamade d_rini, toire ky_k_ ya nanka shiteru to, atarashiku haittekita hito mo, kore wa mitomerareterutte iufuuni omotte, e, okonauto, dakara, imano dankaide hayaku ne, e, shitsuke o shiteoku hitsuy_ ga arimasu to
(In that sense, now is very important time, [I] think, it is because, new members join [the company] one after another, and, [if] the existing members, as [they] have done, take [their] toilet break and the like, then the newly joined people also feel it is permitted, um, [they] do [the same], so, at an early stage [which is] now, well, discipline is required)
- 219 I Um, **Y-san** [name] thinks we are in a critical stage to um give some um kind of the regulations to workers because the, we are receiving the, accepting new workers in the plant and if they see that the current workers take the toilet break so often and **I** think they follow that practices

Here, in Turn 219, the interpreter started her rendition using the name "Y-san" (Mr. Y or J1's name) to specify the subject. Subsequently, she uses different pronouns to indicate the subjects, namely "we" and "I." Although the plural form may be considered to indicate all participants or to indicate a general subject, the use of the first

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person pronoun (to refer to the same person as “Y-san”) in this rendition is confusing. It is difficult to suggest why the interpreter used “I” here, but at least it is possible to point out that all interpreters are accustomed to using “I” in their renditions. In fact, in the stimulated-recall interview, the interpreter claimed as follows: “... *[I am not accustomed to [using the name and the third person], fundamentally, [I] thought all subjects could be dealt with ‘I.’*” Using the actual name and the first person “I” at the same time should be avoided unless “I” refers to the interpreter.

The data shows that there are occasions when the interpreter in this study, in fact, refers to herself in her utterances. For instance, in the above quoted Excerpt 2, after the interpreter is requested by J1 for information, she attempts to report the previous conversations between A1 and A2. In Turn 63, although the subjects are ellipted, as is the case in many Japanese sentences, the verb “omoundesu” (i.e., “think”) clearly indicates that the implied subject is the interpreter herself. In other words, the interpreter is expressing how she feels in this particular rendition. At a slightly different level, the expression at the end of the turn “osshatteta no kana” (i.e., “is that what they’ve] said?”) also suggests that she is incorporating her own view in the utterance. In both expressions, she shows her level of uncertainty, possibly due to the very long conversations that had taken place between A1 and A2. In this instance, too, there is a shift in the interpreter’s footing. Interestingly, the interpreter reported her experience in the previous meeting (a week prior to the examined interaction) in the stimulated-recall interview as follows: “... *when I said “I”... I was asked by a foreigner [Australian], something like, whether it was Z’s [her name] [own] opinion*” This suggests that the interpreter is well aware of potential confusion when using the first person. Nevertheless, the data shows that it is not easy to maintain a proper and consistent footing as the neutral interpreter by choosing appropriate subjects/pronouns in the multiparty situation.

3.3. Expanding and footing shifts

Another interesting case of the interpreter’s rendition is found in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 5

- 70 A2 Selling price, up, achievable or not, X-san [name]
71 I hanbai kakaku o ageru nowa kan_ desuka, 2 mirion, kin_ ano, hanashi o sareteru mitaide, X-san ni hanashi o suru jikan ga
([is it] possible to increase the selling price, 2-million, well, yesterday, [they] seemed to have discussed [about it], [there wasn’t] time to tell X [you])

Here, it is clear that the interpreter expanded the rendition by attaching additional information. According to the interpreter’s explanation in the stimulated-recall interview, the addressee (X) came to the meeting a little bit late. Therefore, he was not aware of the content of earlier discussions. The interpreter, therefore, explained the background for this particular person. Although the use of “X-san” in the interpreter’s utterance is understood as “you” rather than the third person (in Japanese, the actual name can be used to indicate “you”), one can see a shift in the footing within this rendition. That is to say, the first part is considered to be the interpretation of A2’s previous utterance in the conventional sense, the interpreter being a spokesperson. However, the rest is the utterance which involves the interpreter as a speaker who actually creates the content. Using Goffman’s (1981) terms, the interpreter’s role as a speaker is that of author. Although an interpreter may add information, even in a triadic interaction, this particular case should be understood in the context of a multiparty interaction. That is to say, the interpreter chose her strategy of adding this particular information for this particular participant in this particular instance. This example confirms the earlier claim that the interpreter makes necessary adjustments with regard to the footing according to the requirements of an individual participant. This further indicates that the monitoring of all participants in terms of their needs constitutes an important and integral part of the interpreter’s job in a multiparty interpreting situation.

In this section, various instances of shifts in the interpreter’s footing have been illustrated from the data. At one level, the interpreter, intentionally or otherwise, shifts the footing, which is closely related to the functions she provides. In particular, the importance of the footing as a reporter_ or the storyteller_ has been emphasized in the

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multiparty interaction. However, we saw that an inappropriate choice of subject reference, especially in the inconsistent use of pronouns, can cause inadvertent footing shifts.

4. Implications for pedagogy

It has become clear that the multiparty interpreting situation investigated in this paper has a number of characteristics that are not usually discussed in the consideration of dialogue situations with two primary interlocutors speaking different languages. However, this is a case study that looks into one interpreter-mediated interaction; thus, generalization of the nature of multiparty situations is not appropriate. First of all, the number of participants may differ for each situation. Second, each interpreting situation is particular in terms of content, venue, style, atmosphere, and other variables. The situation examined here is a board meeting that was chaired by the CEO. In a more casual interaction, there is even more likelihood of side activities and overlapping speech. On the other hand, at an extremely formal meeting, the rule regarding turn-taking may be more strictly observed. In different interpreting situations, there might be additional important variables to be considered other than the ones discussed here. However, additional responsibilities, such as reporting and summarizing, are considered to be a strong possibility when s/he undertakes interpreting in multiparty interpreting situations. Discussion of multiparty interpreting in two modalities (i.e., between a signed and spoken language) have been explored in another case study conducted by van Herreweghe (2002), which validates the findings of this study. Based on the above findings, I would like to discuss implications for interpreting pedagogy.

In the context of Australia, interpreter training is closely related to the requirements set out in the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics.² Adherence to this ethical code is supposed to be mandatory for all NAATI accredited interpreters. However, it is obvious that the code cannot accommodate the complex situation examined in this paper. In particular, requirements with regard to accuracy must be understood more flexibly. While future interpreters should continue to be exposed to the underlying philosophy of the code, they must be taught that flexible application may be required, and they should be provided a variety of examples.

There is an urgent need to discuss the nature of multiparty interpreting situations in training and education. This is particularly the case for the Japanese language, due to the fact that interpreting in this language is used far more often in business situations than in community interpreting in Australia (Takimoto, 2008). In business interpreting, multiparty interactions are not unusual. Therefore, in addition to practicing and discussing dialogue interpreting situations with two primary interlocutors, students should be exposed to practicing interpreting for multiparty situations as well. However, it is impractical to teach and cover all types of possible scenarios in the curriculum. At the least, students should be aware of what could happen in such a situation. The analysis above has shown that various additional features may effect the interaction. For example, the participants' individual bilingual proficiency has been a factor that influenced the interpreter's interpreting strategy. The study also suggests that the status or authority of the participants may influence the footing of the interpreter. This would directly relate to the interpreter's strategy, in particular, in terms of managing information. In addition, the study indicates that the interpreter's employment status may also have an effect on the ability and motivation to add information using prior knowledge, as well as judgment of the information needs of the participants. A similar aspect has recently been investigated in signed language interpreting in the context of *designated interpreters* (Hauser, Finch, and Hauser, 2008). In the case of the interpreter in this study, she was employed as a staff member, albeit on a short-time basis, and as such, she is considered to be in a better position than a freelance *one-off interpreter* in terms of understanding and responding to the needs of the participants. Therefore, it is deemed appropriate for students to be aware of the various aspects that may effect the interaction in a complex interpreting situation.

Throughout the analysis in this paper, it has become apparent that reporting and summarizing are critical techniques that may be required for interpreting in a multiparty interpreting situation. A particular emphasis should be placed upon stressing the importance of properly indicating the speaker and the addressee (Metzger, 2005), including their relationship (i.e., footing) in the rendition. This can only be done with a proper choice of

² See <http://www.ausit.org/eng/showpage.php3?id=650>

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names and third person pronouns. Previous studies report various cases where interpreters use the third person (Bot, 2005; Cambridge, 1999; Metzger, 2005; Tebble, 1999; Wadensjö, 1999) because they find it necessary to differentiate the *currently speaking self* and when *meaning other* (Wadensjö, 1998) even in typical dialogue interpreting situations. However, this study indicates that the use of the third person can become a necessity in a multiparty situation. In other words, the use of the third person should be understood to be a possibility, and often a requirement, rather than as a prohibition in the context of the multiparty interpreting situation. As we saw in Excerpt 3, above, the use of the first person “I” can be rather misleading, depending on the situation. It is essential to stress that the use of the first person is only relevant when a turn-by-turn rendition is possible. In fact, Gentile, Ozolins & Vasilakakos (1996) point out the possibility of breaking the rule of using the first person in a situation in which there are more than two participants. However, there is hardly any literature that discusses the concrete techniques to be used in such contexts. The notion of footing employed in this paper would be extremely useful as a framework for presenting and considering these issues in a classroom. By incorporating such a view, students will be able to understand how footing shifts are created within a rendition and their potential impact on the communication.

The notion of footing also provides a perspective on the wider context in which the interpreter interacts with other participants. That is, by analyzing the interpreter’s alignment with the participants, it enables us to understand various (i.e., additional) functions that the interpreter undertakes in a multiparty situation, including the important role as the storyteller. The study also suggests that the interpreter makes continuous adjustments in the footing vis-à-vis the knowledge and the language proficiency of each participant. This further implies the importance of emphasizing interpersonal aspects in interpreter-mediated interaction, in particular, in a multiparty situation. Each participant may have different expectations of the interpreter, and the interpreter may, in turn, have to respond to such expectations in mediating the communication.

In a dialogue situation with two primary interlocutors, research studies to date have revealed that the interpreter plays a critical role in coordinating the interaction, including the control of turn-taking (Roy, 2000). In a more complex interaction, such as the one examined here, an interpreter’s function of controlling the flow of interaction is considered to be even more important. However, the analysis of the data in this study suggests that it is extremely difficult to manage or to intervene for the purpose of interpreting in interaction with several participants. The study shows, for instance, that conversations between the speakers of the same language may not be easily interrupted, yet may need to be consecutively summarized for other participants. Although it is difficult to teach future interpreters exactly how to manage the interaction successfully, they can be made aware of the constraints they may face and consider the merits of various strategies for responding to these. For example, it is quite legitimate to emphasize the importance of pre-meeting briefings, so that participants have an opportunity to discuss overarching rules for interaction, including the advantages of one participant taking responsibility for monitoring and controlling turn-taking.

5. Conclusion

By examining the recorded discourse of a multiparty interpreting situation in which the interpreter provided interpreting for seven participants, this study identifies some aspects that are different from dialogue interpreting between two primary interlocutors. In short, the interaction becomes more multilayered with the increased number of participants. The interpreter was required to respond to this complexity. Accordingly, she performed functions that are not usually required in dialogue situations with two primary interlocutors. In addition to acting as the previous speaker’s spokesperson, it has been revealed that the interpreter in this study functioned more widely. In doing so, she constantly adjusted her footing as the required function changed. The ability to monitor the information needs of each participant is essential in mediating multiparty interactions.

The function that is considered to be vital in the interpretation examined here is reporting and summarizing. That is to say, the interpreter adopted a footing as storyteller in order to render discourse that was conveyed over a number of turns between speakers of the same language, which does not usually happen in a dialogue situation with two primary interlocutors using different languages. In order to convey multiparty discourse accurately, it is imperative to use the third person correctly, in order to clearly indicate the speaker and the addressee. This

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technique may sound simple enough, but it may not be the case for those who are so used to using the first person consistently. These techniques need to be widely discussed in interpreter education and training, as conventional curricula may not cover such complex interpreting situations.

The main objective of this paper has been to raise awareness of the pedagogical implications of preparing interpreters to deal with multiparty interactions. However, this study also raises implications for further research in interpreting studies. Clearly, it is crucial to examine multiparty interpreting situations in more depth by investigating additional cases. Indeed, in a multiparty interpreting situation, the interaction becomes much more complex, and at the same time, provides opportunities to see the interpreter's behavior and decisions from different angles.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions

- // overlapping speech commences
- * overlapping speech ends
- (h) laughter
- (word) uncertain transcription
- [] transcriber's remarks, explanations

Notes for translation of extracts

I translated all transcribed Japanese texts into English when quoted in this paper. They are indicated in italics. Because the study uses natural data, many utterances (in particular, in the interview discourse) are spontaneous and not necessarily grammatically correct. I attempted to translate so that the texts reflect the original, rather than making the translation into grammatically correct English. That is to say, the overall approach can be summarized as literal translation.

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