

From Managing Turns to Shaping Actions: Exploring Interpreter Turn Management

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Abstract

This study examines interpreter turn-management practices in role-play dialogue interpreting. While previous research has demonstrated that interpreters shape interaction through rendition practices, less attention has been paid to how their management of turn progression may influence the subsequent organisation of action and response. Drawing on a comparative dataset of role-played Mandarin–English interpreter-mediated medical consultations involving six professional interpreters, the analysis focuses on two interactional contingencies: interpreter intervention into extended explanatory turns and recipients' attempts to respond during ongoing rendition. The findings show that different turn-management practices produce different sequential developments by shaping when actions become available for uptake and response. The study highlights dialogue interpreting as a setting in which mediated access to talk is consequential for the organisation of interaction. The study also offers insights that may inform current approaches to the training and assessment of interpreters' discourse management skills.