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Editorial Intersecting Interpreting Modalities

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Editorial

Intersecting Interpreting Modalities

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Welcome to the first issue of Volume 5 of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education*. This editorial will be short and sweet, so you can get straight on with reading the great collection of articles that we have for you in this issue.

The number of submissions to *IJIE* has grown considerably in 5 years. In particular, and evidenced by the contributions in this issue, we are seeing more submissions dealing with spoken language interpreter education. Interpreting processes and practices are generally acknowledged to be essentially the same across spoken and signed languages; only the working modalities are different (Kellett Bidoli, 2002; Napier, 2011; Nicodemus & Emmorey, 2012; Pöchhacker, 2004)—however, this is a noteworthy distinction that gives rise to others. Spoken language interpreters work between two linear languages, whereby one word is produced after another, and the message is built up sequentially. Signed languages, however, are visual-spatial languages that can convey meaning by creating a picture using space, location, referents and other visually descriptive elements. Signed language interpreters are therefore constantly transferring information between two alternate modalities, which requires the representation of information in very different ways.

Furthermore, signed language interpreters predominantly work in the simultaneous mode as there is no acoustic interference between a spoken language and a signed language. And unlike spoken language interpreters, signed language interpreters seldom take notes in either consecutive interpreting or simultaneous interpreting (Kellett Bidoli, 2002; Napier et al., 2010), because they need to maintain direct eye gaze with deaf signers while either receiving signed input or producing signed output.

The simultaneous approach presents an additional challenge to signed language interpreters due to using two different language modalities (Padden, 2000/2001). Padden argues that when using the consecutive technique, signed language interpreters can operate in one mode at a time, whereas when working simultaneously, the two modalities are co-occurring, putting additional strain on the interpreting process.

The growing body of work that acknowledges the intersections between interpreting modalities (Pöchhacker, 2004) means that we are starting to see an increasing number of researchers and educators collaborating across modalities—as I discussed in the Editorial for Volume 1 of *IJIE* (Napier, 2009). This intersection is also witnessed by my own career move to the U.K., to join the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies at Heriot-Watt

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Editorial

University in Edinburgh. In the department we provide languages and translation and interpreting tuition across a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Arabic, British Sign Language, Chinese, French, German, and Spanish, and a new project has been established to provide intensive training for Scots Gaelic interpreters, so that they can qualify to work in the European Parliament. Our intersections are further evidenced through the second iteration of the European Masters of Sign Language Interpreting (EUMASLI) Program, which is jointly delivered through the cooperation of three universities: Heriot-Watt University (U.K.), University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal (Germany), and Humak University of Applied Sciences (Finland). These intersections highlight the exciting changes taking place in the discipline of interpreting studies. Thus this issue of the journal compiles articles that discuss interpreter education research or issues that could easily be applied across modalities.

In the Research section of this issue, we feature three articles from authors that discuss aspects of interpreter education from different locations worldwide. Michaela Albl-Mikasa from Switzerland presents findings from a study that explored how pedagogical principles from Teaching English as a Foreign Language can be used in interpreter training, especially for training conference interpreters to deal with the nonstandardized forms of English that are used in conference settings. Ineke Crezee and Lynn Grant from New Zealand discuss a classroom-based research project in which they investigated how to teach interpreting students to develop skills to deal with idiomatic language. Jim Hlavac from Australia reports on findings from a recent survey that sought to glean interpreter practitioners' and examiners' views as to whether interpreters should be trained and tested in telephone and video-link interpreting.

The Commentary section features two articles. Sarah Bown from the U.K. discusses how best to encourage university graduates to be reflective interpreter practitioners; and Fatima Cornwall from the U.S.A. shares teaching activities that she uses in the classroom for students to develop their vocabulary.

Debra Russell, as editor of the Open Forum section, once again brings us an intriguing interview with a key contributor to interpreter education. In this issue she interviews Brandon Arthur, who founded StreetLeverage.com, a Web site that features cutting-edge commentaries from leading scholars and practitioners in the (predominantly North American) signed language interpreting sector. The issues that they debate cover a wide range of issues, including topics concerning how to best provide training for new interpreting students. The site is a rich resource not only for interpreter educators for their own edification, but also for interpreting students who can critique and reflect on the content of the articles.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, and take away further food for thought in terms of your own interpreting pedagogical practices.

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