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CONSTRUCTION OF SHARED SEMANTIC SPACES THROUGH GESTURES IN INTERPRETER-MEDIATED PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Gestures are an inherent part of all face-to-face interactions. Nevertheless, their role in interpreter-mediated events has so far been marginalized in the field of interpreting studies. Based on a multimodal corpus of interactions in child psychiatry with migrant patients, this research focuses on the use of iconic gestures, their role in bridging the linguistic gap and in performing cultural mediation. The results of the study suggest that gestures play a part in the construction of shared semantic spaces and act as a marker of interpreting fidelity, hence, becoming corner stones in the trust-building process between the migrant patients and the public service interpreters.

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GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE ACADEMICS

Introduction

Interpreting is the process of oral translation between two parties not being able to communicate directly due to linguistic barrier. Unlike written translation, once the interaction is over, it does not leave any physical trace of the interpreter's performance. The oral character (Ladmiral, 2010) of the exchange imposes immediate decisions on how to overcome linguistic and overall communication difficulties. Taking into consideration the linear development of speech, the time for corrections or clarifications is extremely limited (Lederer, 2010). The interpreter disposes of no possibility of adding footnotes or post-editing their text. Hence, any errors or misunderstandings have to be taken care of within a split second.

The interpreting takes two different forms depending on the context and the target audience involved: the conference interpreting and the public service interpreting. The first one is practiced in prestigious international meetings such as European Parliament's or United Nations' deliberations, scientific conventions or bilateral political negotiations. On the other hand, Pubic Service Interpreting, henceforth PSI, takes place in less prominent settings. It covers everyday interactions of migrant and allophone users with various public institutions (Navarro & Benayoun, 2016) such as hospitals, child welfare services, police and border police departments, social housing organisations, courtrooms and services intended for asylum seekers. The interpreters' role consists in assuring mutual understanding in the multilingual intercultural dialogue between the administrative representatives of such institutions and all users whose language proficiency level is not sufficient to understand and communicate on their own.

The birth of the conference interpreting profession may be traced down to the Nuremberg trials (Baigorri-Jalón, 2014; Mikkelson & Jourdenais, 2015) which put forward the need for bilingual intermediaries capable of delivering the source discourse in the target language. Ever since, with the following development of international political and economic entities (UN, EU, NATO), the conference interpreting (CI) gained wide interest of researchers and academia. It resulted in numerous thorough publications investigating the process of interpreting through the lenses of linguistic variables (Bühler, 1986; Gile, 1999; Kurz & Basel, 2009; Cheung, 2013; Shlesinger, 1994; Grever, 1969; Mead, 2005; Freed, 2000; Pradas Macías, 2006), ethical concerns (Gile, 1995, 2010; Clifford, 2004), normative approach (Harris, 1990; Diriker, 1999) and cognitive phenomena embedded in the translation process (Gile, 2009; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 2001). Rich academic knowledge of this profession gradually started to be expanded on the PSI context (Angelelli, 2008; Benayoun, 2014). Nevertheless, even though the importance of the latter increases every year with growing migration and refugee crisis, its position on the job market and in academia still remains underprivileged in comparison with CI (Ladmiral, 2010; Lederer, 2010).

The predominant place of CI in interpreting studies resulted in focusing on various linguistic features of the transmitted messages, rejecting the visual, nonverbal layer of communication (Krystallidou, 2017). Conference interpreters, often remote and physically absent to the venue itself were therefore conceptualised as transparent, ghosts (Kopczyński, 1994; Tryuk, 2004) or translating machines (Knapp-Potthoff & Knapp, 1987; Baker-Shenk, 1991; Bot, 2005), deprived of their physicality; such perspective lead to limiting the analysis of interpreting to studying the semantic content and the prosodic features of the utterances. Thus, gestures and other nonverbal productions such as gaze, bodily postures or facial expressions have been excluded, concerned as either redundant and irrelevant or treacherous and parasitic elements of communication. Nevertheless, this perspective appears to be ill-suited for PSI, where the use of nonverbal elements may even determine the outcome of the interaction.

In the era of omnipresent multiculturalism, remote communication technologies and expanding culture of image, *visual literacy* (Krystallidou, 2017) seems to play an important role also in interpreting, a field of study which until recently was highly verbo-centric. The present paper in meant to contribute to the developing domain of PSI studies by analysing the variable which until recently has been marginalised (Krystallidou, 2017; Krystallidou, 2020) in this research domain: the use of nonverbal cues. The following sections will discuss how the particular settings and conditions in PSI influence the use of different communication modalities and investigate the potential impact of multimodal approach in interpreting on the interaction's dynamics.

Interactional dynamics in Public Service Interpreting events

Imagine that you have to consult a doctor in a foreign country which language you do not master. In order to be able to communicate with the healthcare professional, you will be granted assistance from an interpreter who will make sure that you obtain all the information conveyed by the doctor in your mother tongue and that the physician receives all your questions and comments in return.

PSI is a bidirectional exchange taking place in a shared space involving physical presence[1] of the interpreter (Collados Aís et al., 2001; Miletich, 2015). The interactions may occur in a number of various contexts, ranging from parent-teacher conferences, through questioning by boarder police, to asylum seekers' hearings. Hence, such form of interpreting requires constantly enlarging one's knowledge of the specialised field of practice and the professional terminology that it implies (Navarro & Benayoun, 2016). On top of that kaleidoscope of involved services, PSI covers a wide range of linguistic varieties, often including minority dialects or foreign accents unfamiliar to the interpreter, as well as other nonstandard alterations such as rural dialects or even slang. The communication obstacles may therefore be present both on semantic and pragmatic levels. Furthermore, the omnipresent imbalance of power relations between the public servants and the migrant users, many of whom have only received basic education, pushes the interpreters to constantly adapt their discourse to the level of knowledge represented by the participants (Navarro & Benayoun, 2016). It is easy to imagine that explaining the French bureaucratic maze to a fellow European citizen is nothing like describing it to an illiterate asylum seeker suffering from Posttraumatic stress disorder and physical damage from their migration journey.

This encounter of radically different life experiences, cultural backgrounds and visions of the world requires from the interpreters to be much more than linguistic filters. They become visible (Angelelli, 2001, 2004) and physically involved actors of the interpreting events, responsible for providing clarifications of culture-specific terms and performing mediation in case of conflicts or misunderstandings (Pöchhacker, 2008; Baraldi, 2015; Navarro & Benayoun, 2015, 2016).

In such context, where mutual understanding (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 2001) of all participants is the crucial element of the equation, the interactants summon all the communication resources useful in getting through with their message. According to language development specialists (McNeill, 1992; Kendon, 2004; Colletta, 2015), nonverbal cues are an inherent part of speech and as such are involved in the information exchange, especially including face-to-face encounters with allophone interlocutors. Nevertheless, until recently they have been rather poorly accounted for in the field of interpreting studies. Today, owing to the dynamic development of remote interpreting (Salaets & Brône, 2020) and the flourishing sector of multimodal corpora annotation tools (Rohlfing, et al., 2006), the emerging research area investigating this parameter attracts the more and more researchers both stemming from interpreting and gesture studies.

Among those who shed light on the role of nonverbal cues in interpreting events, one should mention Poyatos (1987, 1997), the author of very first publications focusing on the nonverbal features of interpreted interaction. His works were followed by those by Rennert (2008) on the speaker's visibility and lack of space-sharing, and on the overall impact of nonverbal cues in conference interpreting (Adam, 2011; Galhano-Rodrigues et al., 2007). This line of research continued with papers covering the use of gestures in consecutive (Boll, 2016) and simultaneous interpreting (Galhano-Rodrigues et al., 2019; Zagar Galvao, 2020). Finally, researchers such as Miletich (2015) and Krystallidou (2017, 2020) started discussing the use of nonverbal features in medical interpreting respectively in their theoretical and empirical contributions, paving the way for grounding gesture analysis in the overarching field of interpreting studies (Pöchhacker, 2015, 2020; Salaets & Brône, 2020). Hence, this paper is intended to raise awareness on the importance of being vigilant towards nonverbal elements of interpreted interactions. The goal of the study is to examine how the use of gestures may contribute to common meaning-making and increase efficiency of the interpreted exchanges.

[1] Nowadays the development of online platforms fosters the remote access to interpreting services via telephone and videoconferencing tools. Nevertheless, the present paper focuses on on-site interpreting requiring that the interpreter physically assists to the events.

Mixed methods approach: capturing a multifaceted phenomenon

Due to relatively new character of this investigation, data triangulation was applied in order to be able to draw a full picture of the use of gestures in PSI. The starting point of the study was an online survey (Chwalczuk, 2019) conducted on a sample of 60 professional interpreters affiliated to ISM Paris – one of the largest French translation agencies operating in Paris in PSI sector. The informants altogether master 43 different working languages and each of them performs on-site interpreting, usually combining various target institutions representing legal, healthcare, and social service settings. The survey provided quantitative data on how the interpreters perceive nonverbal features in their daily practice. The next step consisted in individual semi-structured interviews lasting from 1 to almost 4 hours with a dozen of interpreters. This operation granted a closer insight in the use of gestures in their professional practice and enriched qualitative data by adding precise examples of nonverbal cues' relevance observed along interpreters' career, which in certain cases counted over 20 years of field experience. The perception perspective investigated in the first two studies was thenceforth compared with the production data from a set of 20 video sequences of authentic interpreter-mediated child psychiatry sessions. In line with the previous works exposing the benefits of applying corpus linguistics methods in translation studies (Kübler, 2014), the audio-visual material was analysed with ELAN software, a multimodal corpora annotation tool commonly used in gesture studies (Brugman & Russel, 2009; Lausberg & Sloetjes, 2009; Auer et al., 2010).

Multimodal corpus and its annotation: focus on iconic gestures

The study covered a 4-month observation period of child psychiatry therapy conducted with a 6-year old Sudanese boy accompanied by his parents. An interpreter in Arabic was asked to assist the family due to meaningful cultural discrepancies and the boy's mother limited language proficiency in French. The interactions encompassed 6 to 7 participants, the family, the interpreter (male), the lead psychiatrist (female), an assistant psychologist (female) and the researcher (female). The large number of interactants influenced the coding system applied to video recordings. After transcription of verbal contributions, in terms of nonverbal cues only manual (ex. pointing) and head gestures (ex. nodding) were annotated in detail, as the key parameter of the study. Gaze, facial expressions and attitudes were only included in the annotations (using a separate tier[2]) if they constituted the key element of the exchange.

The following examples will focus on the use of co-speech *iconic* (Cosnier & Vaysse, 1997; McNeill, 1992) gestures. Such gestures show strong formal resemblance with the depicted object. They typically reproduce the shape or the size, the way of manipulating a tool with one's hands or the quality of movement embedded in the represented action. In the most elaborate forms they may approach pantomime. In contrast with *emblems* (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Cosnier & Vaysse, 1997; Poyatos, 1997), their form is not fixed and shared among the representatives of the same culture, therefore iconic gestures for the same referent may vary among gesturers. They are produced spontaneously and usually co-occur with speech (*co-speech gestures*). The qualitative analysis of the corpus suggested a number of multimodal communicational patterns, closer study of which may improve our knowledge and understanding of how gestures impact interpreter-mediated interaction.

Mental imagery and common meaning-making process

The presence of iconic gestures seems to be widely noticed among the interpreters since 83% of the survey respondents confirmed that *'gestures are used to illustrate words'* in PSI events. In addition, 88.7% of the informants stated that *'gestures are a helpful tool in understanding unclear terms'*, such as those proper to a specific dialect or culture. These properties of iconic gestures may stem from the fact that visually encoded information is processed by human brain faster than the verbal one (Childers, 1985) (Kiat & Belli, 2018).

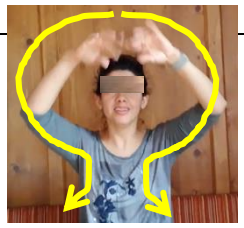
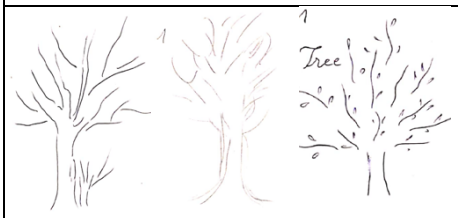
[2] Partition in ELAN is divided in different tiers – lines of annotations enabling the researcher to encode various parameters or events cooccurring in the analysed material (ex. gestures of different speakers).

Furthermore, in multilingual context, the visual input does not require language decoding, and therefore grants immediate access to semantic features of the referent. Nevertheless, as it has been abundantly discussed in linguistics and translation studies (Angelelli, 2004; Pöchhacker, 2008; Navarro & Benayoun, 2016), language is only one of multiple representations of a given culture, mindset and vision of the world. Therefore, it is natural to wonder: are iconic gestures still transparent (Andrén, 2010) in multicultural dialogue? May the interpreters blindly omit their verbal clarification, assuming that their illustrative character makes them redundant to speech?

In order to shed light on this matter, crucial from the interpreting point of view, an additional small-scale pilot study was conducted. The goal was to investigate the impact of one's individual, culturally shaped mental imagery on the form of iconic gestures. The experiment's sample included 17 multilingual participants of 8 nationalities, speaking between 2 and 30 languages each. The task was by no means complex: the informants were asked to show separate words with gestures and subsequently to draw simple pictures illustrating their meaning.

As presented below, according to the typical landscape on one's home country, the participants pictured (and drew) different representations of the word tree, ranging from ever-green trees (Western Asia), through broad-leaf trees (Central Europe) to conifers (Eastern Europe). Even though the findings are too restraint to be conclusive, they show a significant pattern. The results of the experiment suggest that the form of iconic gestures depends on the physical properties of the prototypical referent (Fortis, 2018) which underlies one's mental imagery. Furthermore, as pointed out by neuropsychological research on gesture production (Lausberg et al., 2007), gestures can provide additional information about the referent, precising the verbal messages. Indeed, the informants did not only communicate the key semantic element, the tree, but also pointed to a specific type. This observation goes in line with research in sign languages (Bouvet, 1997), according to which gestures (or signs) are more efficient in conveying information which encodes visual features of a physical object. That, in turn, is due to their multidimensional properties, as opposed to linear character of speech (Bouvet, 1997).

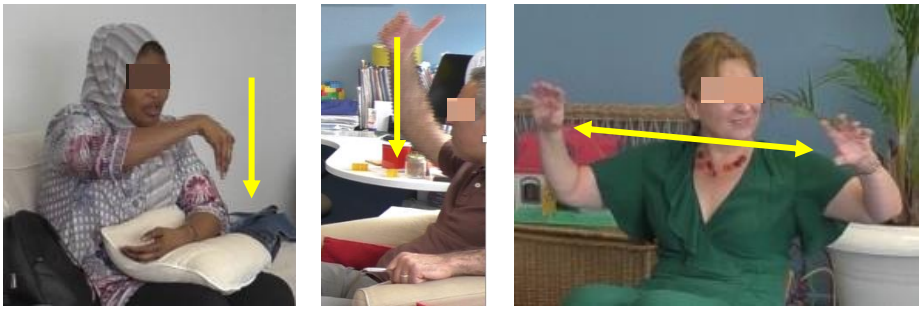
Figure 1: Iconic gestures as representations of mental imagery – experimental findings

Pattern 1: Hands opening upwards	**Pattern 2: Downward round gesture**	**Pattern 3: Straight downward gesture**
		
Photograph 1: sex: F, age: 47, origin: Iran, residence: Iran	Photograph 2: sex: F, age: 39, origin: Iran, residence: Germany	Photograph 3: sex: M, age: 85, origin: Poland, residence: Poland
		
Drawings: (left) sex: F, age: 31, origin: Iran, residence: Iran (middle) sex: M, age: 33, origin: Iran, residence: Germany (right) sex: F, age: 29, origin: Iran, residence: Germany	Drawings: (left) sex: M, age: 77, origin: USA, residence: Netherlands (middle) sex: F, age: 47, origin: Iran, residence: Germany (right) sex: F, age: 37, origin: Azerbaijan, residence: Turkey	Drawings: (left) sex: F, age: 81, origin: Poland, residence: Poland (right) sex: M, age: 85, origin: Poland, residence: Poland

Given the culturally-specific production of iconic gestures, one may assume that their usage in multicultural interpreter-mediated encounters is bound to hinder the communication process by causing misunderstandings. Nonetheless, the data from child psychiatry corpus suggest otherwise.

Sequences from video recordings show that in case of discrepancy between the gesture and the illustrated key-term, or two gestures used by different participants to represent the same word, the interaction cannot continue until the meaning of the central concept is clarified (Figure 2). For instance, the screen-shots above present a sequence in which the interpreter was clarifying a culture-enrooted concept for the lead psychiatrist. As the patient's mother said (in Arabic): '*In Sudanese family, it is the mother that holds the pillar of the house*'. The meaning of this saying remained unnatural and unclear for the therapist since both the mother and the interpreter used a vertical gesture to depict the pillar, while the psychiatrist pictured it rather as a beam of a European house (horizontal gesture accompanying her verbal comment '*You mean the beam?*'). Indeed, the construction of a *tukul*, a typical round Sudanese cottage, starts by setting a wooden pillar in the ground, the action of which is probably at the origin of the used expression. During the discussed therapy session, the exchange of examples, explanations and spatial drawings – iconic gestures – continued for 51 seconds until the agreement was reached, serving the only purpose of clarifying this one controversial gesture.

Figure 2: Iconic gestures illustrating the same concept: (left) mother: [PILLAR]; (middle) interpreter [PILLAR]; (right) psychiatrist [BEAM]



The example shows that the iconic gestures not only have the potential of immediately signalling misunderstandings, but also, they enable the speakers to confront their visions of the world by opening access to their mental imagery. The analysed corpus provided several examples of that sort, where the urge to clarify the concept which was new to one of the speakers lead to almost pantomimic performances. This observation in spontaneous interpreter-mediated speech suggests that gestures play an important role in common discourse construction and that the process of meaning-making is not unilateral (Chwalczuk, 2020, in press) but involves all the participants of a given communication event. The findings corroborate previous evidence from gesture studies, indicating that the use of gestures may contribute to clarifying the meaning of ambiguous verbal utterances (Holler & Beattie, 2003) or unclear concepts. Hence, it enables the speakers to elaborate shared semantic spaces (Chwalczuk, 2020, in press), as observed by (Holler, 2005, p. 17) "co-speech gestures are used in the coordination of meaning to allow interactants to arrive at a shared understanding of the things we talk about."

Taboo terms: gestures as a cultural mediation tool

Mutual respect and acquaintance with the principals of social etiquette are the cornerstone of intercultural relations. According to the survey results, ritual nonverbal salutations such as shaking one's hand or smiling while greeting someone are the most frequently mentioned gestures labelled as indispensable in PSI interactions (mentioned in 18 out of 24 free comments on the corresponding question). They appear not to be the only tools of nonverbal politeness though.

Both comments included in the survey and in the individual interviews voiced the issue of using iconic gestures in order to avoid shameful or disgraceful words which might sound provocative or insulting for the migrant patients. Among such culturally controversial terms, a number of interpreters quoted expression such as *to be pregnant* or *to have a miscarriage* (c.f. Baraldi, 2015). According to the informants, such actions were rather conveyed by means of iconic gestures than words: respectively, a round belly tracing gesture and a downward movement of hands. In multicultural settings, the most routine medical questions concerning bodily actions may be perceived as insults, leading to an immediate conflict and breach of communication. Research on social functioning of taboo terms (Burridge, 2006; Napoli & Hoeksema, 2009; Brookes H. J., 2011; Brookes H., 2014) proves that nonverbal equivalents of prohibited or offensive words are less stigmatised in language, since most societies perceive them as less powerful and important than verbal utterances. Thus, appropriately applied gestures may be seen a tool of cultural mediation (Pöchhacker, 2008; Navarro, 2013; Navarro & Benayoun, 2016), one of the crucial skills in PSI.

Gestural replacement of taboo terms was commonly mentioned by the interpreters in the context of one more semantic area: the one of violence and physical abuse. For instance, Question (n°28) *Can gestures replace words* received comments such as: (Answer n°28.16) "In case of sexual assault or abuse the victim who is incapable of describing the details of the assault may use gestures to illustrate the action or to simply show that she is not fit to continue the interview."[3] Another informant stated that: (Answer n°28.18) [In

[3] The comments included by the informants in the survey have been translated from French by the paper's author.

torture descriptions] *"(...)* Gestures help to mimic suffered actions, ex. blindfolding, having one's hands and feet tied up (Which is also useful for the visual memory of the interpreter!)." In the light of recent studies dealing with pain descriptions (Rowbotham et al., 2011, 2013), it has been proven that gestures constitute an important means of accessing the meaning in verbally impaired pain descriptions. The body, in such contexts, becomes the common point of reference for all the interactants, regardless of their language (Bouvet, 1997). Therefore, one can conclude that the importance of *reading* gestures in PSI increases not only with the complexity of the discussed topic, but also with the emotional burden embedded in the subject of the conversation.

Inclusive and empowering potential of gestures

The last quote mentioned above underscored another essential element of iconic gestures. Namely, they might be *'useful for the visual memory of the interpreter'*. Indeed, numerous studies (Cook & Goldin-Meadow, 2006; Cartmill et al., 2013; Novack et al., 2015; Aussems & Kita, 2017) show that accompanying new or problematic words with a gesture in language acquisition or second/foreign language classroom increases one's efficiency in memorising them. Thus, such double coding (Ducharme & Fraisse, 1965; Paivo, 1969) of the same semantic element with verbal and visual stimuli not only fosters their understanding on the spot, but also facilitates the process of integrating them in one's own lexicon (Chwalczuk, 2020, in press). The key-term is in that case associated with the mental image of the referent, rather than with a word in another language.

On the one hand, the use of iconics may therefore be helpful for the interpreters, who cannot translate anything until they fully understand the source message themselves. According to the *Interpretative Theory of Translation* (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 2001), the core of the cognitive translating operations is threefold: grasping the meaning of the given utterance in the source language, deverbalizing the semantic content of the message, recreating its meaning in the target language. As Gile (2009) argues in his *Effort Models*, the interpreting is such a demanding cognitive process that the interpreters always operate close to the limits of their processing capacities: one problematic element above the average is enough to overload the 'system'. Hence, from the interpreter's point of view, any means capable of diminishing the cognitive workload (Goldin-Meadow et al., 2001; Gillespie et al., 2014) and helping in accessing the deverbalized meaning of the message is at a premium.

On the other hand, the patients may also greatly benefit from integrating the iconics. To start with, when gestures of the practitioner are aimed directly at the user, even though the latter cannot understand their speech, they are immediately symbolically included in the conversation (Chwalczuk, 2020, in press). Knowing that the acquisition of a second language is facilitated by double coding, we may assume that the interpreting users are likely to memorise the gesture-accompanied terms which are repeatedly used in sessions. The present research project provided a couple of examples corroborating this hypothesis. For instance, the patient's mother easily integrated the French key-word 'the camera' which has been used with the same iconic gesture on multiple occasions during the first filmed session. Interestingly, she would reproduce this verbal-gestural entity in the following encounters, even though the therapy takes place only once a month. The example suggests that the interpreted multilingual encounters help in language acquisition of the target language. Therefore, they may constitute an important means of empowering the migrants who step by step become more independent and, in the long run, are better prepared to integrate into the destination country's society.

Gestures as trust-builders

As it was established, the interpreters do not limit their performance to a simple oral transcoding from one language to another. On the contrary, they constantly adapt their discourse to the addressees, replacing potentially conflictual elements with neutral ones and providing cultural insights where necessary. The surveyed professionals naturally agreed with this statement: asked if *'the interpreter can translate nothing*

but words', 86.4% of the respondents gave a negative answer. The question remains: how do the interpreters deal with gestures produced by the speakers?

From the perception point of view, according to the survey findings, 56.9% of the informants admit that they *'happen to reproduce speakers' gestures'*, but more importantly, more than two thirds of them (67.6%) believe that this strategy *'increases the interaction's efficiency'*. The evidence from the multimodal corpus seems to corroborate these data.

Figure 1: Direct nonverbal response [CONCEPTUALISE]

The example above (Figure 3) illustrates a sequence in which the therapist and the interpreter define the key-word handball for the patient's mother. The name of the sport is first spontaneously illustrated by the gesture in the psychiatrist's contribution. The same gesture is naturally reproduced seconds later by the interpreter during his translation in Arabic. As a result, the addressee receives the same message twice: first without access to the meaning of the simultaneously produced word (in French), and later as a full semantic unit composed of the word and the illustrative gesture. The convergence of visual and verbal stimuli reassures the users of the translation's fidelity with the original message, which is crucial for building a trustful relation (Chwalczuk, 2019).

Furthermore, as pictured above, the patient's mother imitates the same gesture in order to confirm that she received the message correctly. In this chain of *triangular mirroring* (Chwalczuk, 2019) her nonverbal contribution, opposed to verbal comments, is immediately accessible for all the participants, which accelerates the communication process. The mimicry of co-speech gestures is yet another manifestation of a common meaning-making process (Holler & Wilkin, 2011). Such attempts of sending a message directly to the allophone addressee, without passing through the interpreter, is also represented in Figure 4, illustrating the verb 'to conceptualize'. The initiative of addressing the therapist directly, even without words, may be seen as sign of migrant users' growing independence and willingness to communicate despite the impairment of the verbal channel.

Figure 4. Triangular mirroring [HANDBALL]

Concluding remarks

Despite verbo-centric approach dominating the research in interpreting studies, visual features of interpreter-mediated encounters seem to be a highly present and meaningful parameter in public service interpreting. Considerable discrepancies between the public servants' and migrant users' cultural and educational backgrounds result in lack of common points of reference and or shared experiences. Meeting half-way-through between those different universes requires additional effort of explaining the elements of their respective realities, often unfamiliar to the other party or inexistent in their conceptual repertory. Frequently, those explanations are not only hindered by the lack of lexical equivalents in the target language, but above all – the lack of the concept itself in the given culture. Thus, the interpreters are not only vectors but actors of the common meaning-making process, in which the participants elaborate together the representations and the definitions of the used terms. This operation is an indispensable element of establishing a sustainable dialogue resulting in measurable progress in psychotherapy. The present study provides examples of how this process can be stimulated by the use of gestures which immediately signal discrepancies in the interactants' conceptualisations of the same notions and enable the participants to 'negotiate' the meaning beyond words. Furthermore, the findings suggest that iconic gestures may provide additional insight in the migrant's perspective and vision of the world by granting access to culturally-motivated mental imagery. Deeper understanding of the migrant's background and mind-set may in turn lead to diminishing the cultural gap and building a more robust communication relation.

Interpreted child psychiatry sessions imply bringing an external entity – an interpreter – into an inherently complex, and somehow intimate dynamics binding the minor patient, their caretakers and the therapist. Therefore, the interpreter needs to carefully build and nurture trustful relation with the participants in order to be able to assist them efficiently. That may be achieved by exercising nonverbal politeness principals such as greeting rituals differing among cultures. The use of adapted conventions of

social behaviour is an essential means of showing respect for the migrant's customs and assuring them of the interpreter's acquaintance with their cultural practices.

The results of the study also shed light on the gestures' role in fostering cultural mediation by giving the participants an elegant and effective way of omitting taboo terms, such as those concerning bodily actions and therefore highly present in medical settings. In addition, the human body frequently becomes the common point of reference when verbal expression is hindered by the emotional trauma of the patient. Thus, gestures permit to increase intelligibility of incomplete or interrupted verbal statements in descriptions of suffered violence and tortures, which are essential for putting in motion legal procedures on the destination's country soil. Consequently, taking into account nonverbal means of expression in such contexts appears to be crucial.

According to the findings from cognitive studies, the use of gestures may play a role in diminishing the cognitive workload of the interpreter involved in mental processes of translation. Spontaneous illustrative gestures produced by the speakers may be a helpful tool in stimulating the visual memory and facilitating access to deverbalized meaning of the source utterances. Moreover, co-speech gestures of the participants present an inclusive potential in the sense that, addressed directly to the allophone interactant, they immediately permit to symbolically include them in the conversation, without the delay due to the interpreting. Convergence between the message received visually in the first place and the rendition provided by the interpreter may reassure the migrant user of the interpreting fidelity, enhancing the trust-building process. Furthermore, owing to the double coding of the same semantic element conveyed verbally and with a gesture the migrant patients memorise key terms of the interactions more naturally, which increases their proficiency in the target language and therefore leads to their higher independence. The latter may be manifested by the attempts of addressing the social worker, in this context – the therapist directly, by means of nonverbal productions showing the patient's implication in the interaction and their willingness to communicate. The examples from the video corpus show that in some cases users, encouraged by abundant production of gestures by the public servant and the interpreter, may confirm their understanding by reproducing the key gesture illustrating the concept. Such triangular mirroring of gestures provokes a shift in interaction's dynamics leading to a more direct communication.

To conclude, gestural productions could by no means replace the work of a professional interpreter who, except from bilingual code-switching, performs intercultural mediation and assures conflict-free, constructive communication and mutual understanding beyond cultural differences. Nevertheless, the use of gestures, which for decades has been marginalised in interpreting studies, may have a beneficial impact on the interactions' efficiency by diminishing communicational gap resulting from the encounter of different languages and cultures. Therefore, the results of the present study promoting multimodal approach to interpreter-mediated public service interactions suggest that visual literacy of both the interpreters and the public service professionals may be an effective means of increasing the overall communication effectiveness in such settings.

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