



UMR 5191
Interactions, Corpus, Apprentissages, Représentations

Researching nonverbal dimensions in synchronous videoconferenced-based interactions

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Introduction (1)

- Stage 2 of a project on a corpus of teacher-learner interactions using Skype
- Stage 1 - Guichon & Cohen (to be published, *CMLR*):
 - ➔ Few significant differences between interactions **with** and **without** webcam on several variables
 - ➔ Limitation of using quantitative approaches to explore detail of the interactions: if nonverbal elements (e.g. gestures, gaze, facial expressions) add a crucial dimension to CMC, a micro analysis is required

Introduction (2)

- Qualitative and descriptive study in line with gesture studies (Kendon, 1980, 2004; McNeil, 1992) as used by SLA researchers (Gullberg, 2006; McCafferty & Stam, 2008)
- Originality of current study: it explores CMC in a pedagogical situation
 - Complexity of online interactions
 - Training online teachers to develop critical semiotic awareness (Guichon, 2013)

Specific features of this type of exchange (1)

- It is pedagogical but uses tools generally used for social communication
- Interactants have access to their interlocutor's image and **their own image** through the webcam

Specific features of this type of exchange (2)

- Looking at the interlocutor's image on the screen rather than looking directly into their eyes (cf. de Chanay, 2011)
- The framing and technical environment lead to:
 - a slightly distorted access to the interaction (image speed, sound quality)
 - a partial view of the interlocutor which focuses the gaze → a magnifying effect

Participants

- French undergraduate students learning English as a non-specialist subject, using Skype with the webcam on (videoconferencing)
- Homogeneous level (B2) = Cambridge Quick Placement Test
- Same native English-speaking teacher whom the students do not know, at her own home

Learners in the case study

	<i>Score Quick Placement Test /40</i>	<i>Familiarity with online CMC tools</i>	<i>Perceptions towards speaking English</i>
Antoine	37/40	1/4	2/4
Edward	26/40	3/4	3/4
Fleur	28/40	1/4	1/4

Data collection

- Skype interaction
- Same duration (approx. 10 minutes)
- Same task – describing 4 photographs

Task: *Describe these 4 pictures*

(loud-)speakers
ear-lobe
earring



corridor
wheel-chair
doll



burial
funeral
coffin



soft toy / teddy bear
gazing



Instructions

- You're going to interact with an English teacher
- For this experiment, you're going to use Skype and speak in English for about 10 minutes
- Describe the 4 photos (**which the teacher hasn't seen**) and try to be as precise as possible
- If you have any difficulties, ask the teacher for help and try to avoid speaking French

Study corpus

- A short 2-4 minute extract corresponding to the description of the picture of the old lady in hospital



Research question

What types of nonverbal cues are available to online teachers to help them to manage a pedagogical interaction in the L2?

- Gestures
- Gaze
- Facial expressions

➔ What multimodal orchestration to make meaning?

3 types of analysis

1. Self-regulatory gestures vs. gestures for communication
2. Gestures which contribute something to the construction of the message vs. gestures which potentially cause interference and are distracting
3. Redundant vs. complementary gestures

Semio-pedagogical competence

- Semio-pedagogical competence (**in transmission**) = appropriate use of available semiotic modes and technological resources to enhance learning (cf. Guichon, 2013)
- Semio-pedagogical competence (**in reception**) = capacity to decode learners' facial expressions, gestures, gaze in order to successfully manage the computer-based interaction

- ➔ Being attentive to certain nonverbal cues (thinking faces, self-regulatory gestures, etc.) to give learners time to construct their utterances
- Technology mediated learning situations enable the teacher to focus more on these signs

- What would be intrusive in face-to-face classroom situations is placed at a distance through the technical learning environment = affordance of the webcam
- Reinforces a feeling of presence at a distance (Weissberg, 1999)

THANKS
FOR
YOUR
ATTENTION

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