Linking up with Video: Perspectives on Interpreting Practice and Research, edited by Heidi Salaets and Geert Brône (Benjamins Translation Library 149). John Benjamins: Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2020. 240 pp. € 95.00 (hbk) ISBN 9789027204653, € 95.00 (e-book) ISBN 9789027261809.

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The last 10 years have seen a gradual development of technologies used in interpreting (Fantinuoli, 2018), as evidenced by the growing popularity of remote interpreting (Braun, 2015) and the use of computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) tools (Biagini, 2016; Prandi, 2018). The book under review, edited by Heidi Salaets and Geert Brône, complements this research by looking at the role of video in interpreted interactions. The book consists of eight chapters preceded by an introduction, where the editors delimit the scope of the book and discuss the various meanings of “linking up with video,” including the use of video technology in interpreted communication, the analysis of video-recorded data in interpreting studies, and the potential usability of insights from on-site interpreting in the process of developing technologies for remote interpreting. Thus, “video” is not only conceptualised in the book as a communication medium in interpreting practice but also as a valuable tool to collect and analyse multimodal data in interpreting research.

In Chapter 1, Franz Pöchhacker provides a conceptual framework for the book and addresses the relationship between interpreting and video in a broader context of social semiotics and communication studies. The notions of mediality and multimodality are discussed with reference to interpreter-mediated communication. The author points to the fact that “interpreting scholars have engaged with the multimodality of interpreting to only a limited extent” (p. 14) and emphasises the importance of considering multiple modes and information channels when discussing the process of interpreting. In the final section of the chapter, Pöchhacker highlights the role of video as a tool that offers researchers insights into the multimodal nature of interpreting. In this way, the chapter foreshadows the book as a whole, where “video” is approached from multiple perspectives and in various interpreting situations.

In Chapter 2, Sabine Braun reports on an interview study with eight legal interpreters and three police officers on their perception of video remote interpreting—the
configuration where the interpreter is separated from all participants in the interaction. The interviews followed a simulation of both on-site and video remote interpreting of police-suspect interviews. The author discusses the results with reference to four main themes: overall perception of video remote interpreting, technological basis, communication management, and interpreting performance. The study is a valuable contribution to research on video remote interpreting in that it considers not only the perception of interpreters but also other primary participants in interpreter-mediated communication. Some of the conclusions formulated by Braun refer to the differences between interpreters and police officers in how they perceive and conceptualise video remote interpreting. Since the study involved only three police officers, it could be extended to include a more representative sample of primary participants that would help support the results presented in the chapter.

Chapter 3, by Esther de Boe, discusses the impact of telephone and video interpreting on interpreting quality in health care settings. To this end, the author analysed simulations of doctor–patient consultations interpreted by three interpreters in three configurations: (1) face-to-face, (2) telephone, and (3) video interpreting. The data were annotated for the following categories: (1) issues related to both message equivalence and interaction, (2) interaction management, and (3) environment and technology (e.g., image and sound quality, operation of equipment, external disturbances). Preliminary results from the first series of simulations showed that the interpreting mode may indeed influence interpreting quality, but that these differences mainly refer to interactional issues in remote interpreting, and not message equivalence. As De Boe notes, “the preliminary findings of the first series of simulations need to be complimented by further analysis and by the findings of series II and III” (p. 99). That could help formulate more definite conclusions about the influence of interpreting mode on interpreting quality.

Chapter 4, by Robert G. Lee, explores the notion of role-space in video relay services provided for Deaf people and video remote interpreting. The author applies the role-space model (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014), designed for face-to-face settings, to interpreting services provided remotely. The model emphasises the role of linguistic, interpersonal, and intercultural aspects of interpreting and lists three main dimensions of interaction in interpreting: interaction management, participant alignment, and presentation of self. In the chapter, Lee uses the model to compare role-space in face-to-face and remote interpreted interactions. This is a valuable contribution to the literature on remote interpreting, as not only does it point to its characteristic features from a theoretical perspective, but it also “highlights areas to be considered in implementing effective [video remote interpreting] situations” (pp.122–123).

In Chapter 5, Isabelle Heyerick addresses the importance of video recordings as a data collection tool in signed language interpreting research. The author posits that since interpreting is an interactive event that also involves non-verbal communication, it should be researched by means of collecting and analysing multimodal data. Heyerick discusses both the benefits and challenges of using video as a tool in research on signed language interpreting, on the basis of a small-scale study involving eight hearing and deaf Flemish Sign Language interpreters. The dataset consisted of preparation sessions adopting a think-aloud process methodology, an actual interpreting task, and recall interviews stimulated by the recordings of the interpreting task. The author outlines potential
challenges in using video as a data collection and elicitation tool and offers suggestions on how to deal with these issues. Interestingly, the interpreters in the study were asked whether they would prefer to perform the interpreting task in front of, or without, an audience, and some opted for not having an audience. The fact that this procedure was not standardised for all participants could potentially act as a confounding variable, as access to the audience can be regarded as an important interactional factor in interpreted communication.

Chapter 6, by Elena Zagar Galvão, discusses the use of gestures in simultaneous interpreting on the basis of her study conducted with four professional conference interpreters. Each participant was asked to interpret two speeches differentiated by the degree of the speaker’s expressiveness. The study showed that the interpreters gestured more when interpreting the speech delivered by the more expressive speaker. It would be interesting to correlate this data with output quality, for example to test whether gestural mimicry would result in a better interpretation, both in terms of message equivalence and assessment provided by interpretation users. Interestingly, the speeches used in the study differed in delivery rate quite significantly: The first speech was 110 words per minute, whereas the second was 187 words per minute. Although the author reports that both speeches were subjectively evaluated by the participants as fast, ideally they should be matched to minimise the potential impact of speech rate on interpreter behaviour.

In Chapter 7, Demi Krystallidou supports other claims in the book as to the importance of multimodality in interpreting and posits that non-verbal cues should be considered when analysing the process of interpreting. The author suggests that both verbal and non-verbal communication can impact the interaction between participants in medical interpreting, and thus video-recorded data should be used in interpreting research. To this end, Krystallidou compares four audio-based transcripts of interpreter-mediated interactions with four video-based ones. The analysis of the video recordings makes it possible to identify how interaction is managed in interpreted medical consultations. The author concludes that “participation is not only achieved by means of verbal resources, but also through gaze, body orientation, gestures and facial expressions, while it can be facilitated by silences which can create the conditions for participation” (p. 200). This, again, points to the importance of a comprehensive approach to analysing interpreting research data, which takes into account its intrinsically multimodal nature.

In the final chapter of the book, Jelena Vranjes and Geert Brône discuss the role of the interpreter’s gaze in the process of turn-taking in interpreter-mediated face-to-face interactions. The authors analysed six interpreted consultations with Dutch-speaking student counsellors and Russian-speaking students as participants. Eye-tracking was employed to identify gaze patterns used by interpreters to manage turn-taking, which is a very interesting contribution to research on interaction in interpreting. The results section could be complemented by providing some quantitative data (e.g., fixation counts, fixation durations) that would support the conclusions made on the basis of the purely qualitative analysis of the multimodal feedback process and gaze patterns in interpreted communication. The chapter could also feature a more thorough discussion about some of the methodological challenges of using eye-tracking in interpreting research.

In general, the book discusses “video” both as medium and as a data collection tool. The book makes a contribution to interpreting research by looking at the concept of
multimodality in interpreting from various perspectives. The authors remind the reader that interpreting is a complex communicative act, encompassing not only language but also non-verbal communication, space arrangement, and turn-taking, just to name a few examples. Research reported in the book touches upon the various aspects of multimodality of interpreting. However, it should be highlighted that some of these studies are quite exploratory in nature, something that is also noted by the editors (p. 3). The studies could be replicated on bigger samples of interpreters, to offer a more comprehensive insight into the relationship between video and interpreting.

As a final remark, as the book was published in early 2020, it would be difficult not to appreciate its timely release in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, most interpreted communication took place online and was dependent on video. This, along with the dynamic development of remote interpreting technologies, is the best testimony that research on the role of video in interpreting is timely and necessary. The interpreting literature has discussed not only the benefits but also the challenges and limitations of remote interpreting. As video communication is now an inherent part of interpreter-mediated interactions, “linking up with video” seems to be one of the most topical issues to be addressed in interpreting practice and research alike.

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Biography
Paweł Korpal is assistant professor at the Faculty of English of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań. He is also a psychologist, and a practising translator and interpreter. He is involved in interdisciplinary research, combining interpreting studies and psychology. His research interests include stress and emotion in conference and community interpreting, cognitive processing in simultaneous interpreting, the use of eye-tracking in translation and interpreting studies, and psychophysiological measures of emotional language processing.