

COMPETENZA DEL MEDIATORE LINGUISTICO
O VINCOLO DELL'INTERAZIONE?
UNA RIFLESSIONE SUL TRADURRE NELLA CONVERSAZIONE TRA
PERSONALE MEDICO E PAZIENTE

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with a particular, though increasingly common, type of interaction, involving clinicians and patients speaking different languages and a mediator providing interpreting service. Although the mediator is the only interlocutor in the interaction with access to everything that is said, s/he participates in the interaction “on behalf” of the other interlocutors, who ultimately have the right to say what they want to say. This right of access to knowledge, which has been referred to by John Heritage, as “epistemic authority” seems to account for the negotiation of what is translated and how, authorising the mediator to render the interlocutors’ contributions in particular ways, e.g., extensively explained or cut short. This study focuses on one single sequence, following the moment in the (medical) interaction when, after examining the patient or her/his tests, the clinician summarizes the clinical results and provides suggestions, therapies or new tests. I examine the dynamics involved in rendering the clinician’s contribution in the interaction and discuss these dynamics in the light of a debate on the role of the interpreter in interaction.