

# A corpus of interpreter-mediated interactions as a tool for interpreter training



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# Outline of this paper

1. Research background(s)
2. Short course on “Action Theory” and “Applied Discourse Studies”
3. Corpus design
4. Corpus use

# Research background

- Research on ad-hoc-interpreting in hospitals (1999-2005)
- Impact of multilingual communication on institutional discourse (genre structures, bad news delivery, expert-lay-constellations)
- Result: “ad-hoc-interpreters failed in almost all areas” (Bührig & Meyer 2004), such as:
  - Modality (Meyer 2005)
  - Reported speech (Johnen & Meyer 2007)
  - Specialized language (Meyer 2004)
  - Impersonal constructions (Bührig & Meyer 2003)
- Service providers tend to “make do” with non-proficient patients: patients are treated as if they speak German

...anaticum), sondern der so...

Auswahl vieler Möglichkeiten im Hinblick...

Trotz der Hoffnungen, die man auf die Eint...

...dungshemmenden Nebennierenrindenhormone se...

alten Mittel (*Salizylsäure, Aspirin, Pyram*...

...Bedeutung behalten. In letzter Zeit traten das Buta...

...d das Resorcin, über das aber noch nicht ausreichend...

...en vorliegen, hinzu. *Hormone* der Nebennier...

...das die Nebennierenrindensekretion fördernde Ho...

...ypophysenvorderlappens (*ACTH = adrenocortic*...

...rmon) zeichnen sich durch schnelle und zuverläss...

...aus. Durch chemische Umwandlungen sind die n...

...ebennierenrindenhormone in ihrer Wirkung wes...

...worden, vor allem sucht man das Auftreten...

...nungen zu verhindern. Eine pharmel...



# Research background

- Transfer-project on training for ad-hoc-interpreters (since 2008)
- Cooperation with local hospital
- Participants are nurses with migration background and experience in ad-hoc-interpreting

# Research background

- Purpose of transfer-project
  - Develop training contents and methods
  - Carry out training over six-month period (one session per month)
  - Evaluate training with pre- and post-interviews (semi-structured narrative)
- Training contents are based on
  - previous research
  - pre-training interviews with participants
- Training materials based on communicative practices of participants
- Aim: Be close to the communicative experiences of participants to enable “functional linguistic reflection” (“Why that now?”)

# Applied Discourse Studies

- Methodologies for communication training
- Theoretically based on Conversation Analysis, Pragmatics, and Ethnomethodology, i.e. approaches to language use
- Developing in German speaking countries since 1990
- Movement rather than political party
- Trainings should:
  - Take into account participant perspectives
  - Draw on empirical findings from the specific setting
  - Focus communicative practices of participants

# Action Theory

- (Verbal) actions are shaped by purposes
- Purposes are not individual but social entities
- Individual members of a society or group acquire knowledge about means-end relations, i.e. knowledge about how to perform verbal actions in order to achieve specific communicative purposes
- Research aims at formulating in which way specific linguistic means serve specific communicative purposes (reconstruction of means-end relations)
- Back and forth between empirical case studies and theoretical assumptions



# Action Theory



# Corpus design

- Identifying relevant discourse types
- Identifying communicative purposes, linguistic means, and verbal actions
- Identifying typical pitfalls and shortcomings of interpreter-mediated communication in hospitals

# Corpus design

- Three discourse types:
  - Medical interviews
  - Informed consent
  - Medical findings
- Selection criteria:
  - Relevance
  - Frequency
  - Require interpreting
  - Different registers and knowledge-types:
    - ✦ Colloquial language, patient-based knowledge (medical interviews)
    - ✦ Technical language, expert-based knowledge (informed consent)
    - ✦ Technical language, expert-based knowledge, bad news delivery (medical findings)

# Corpus design

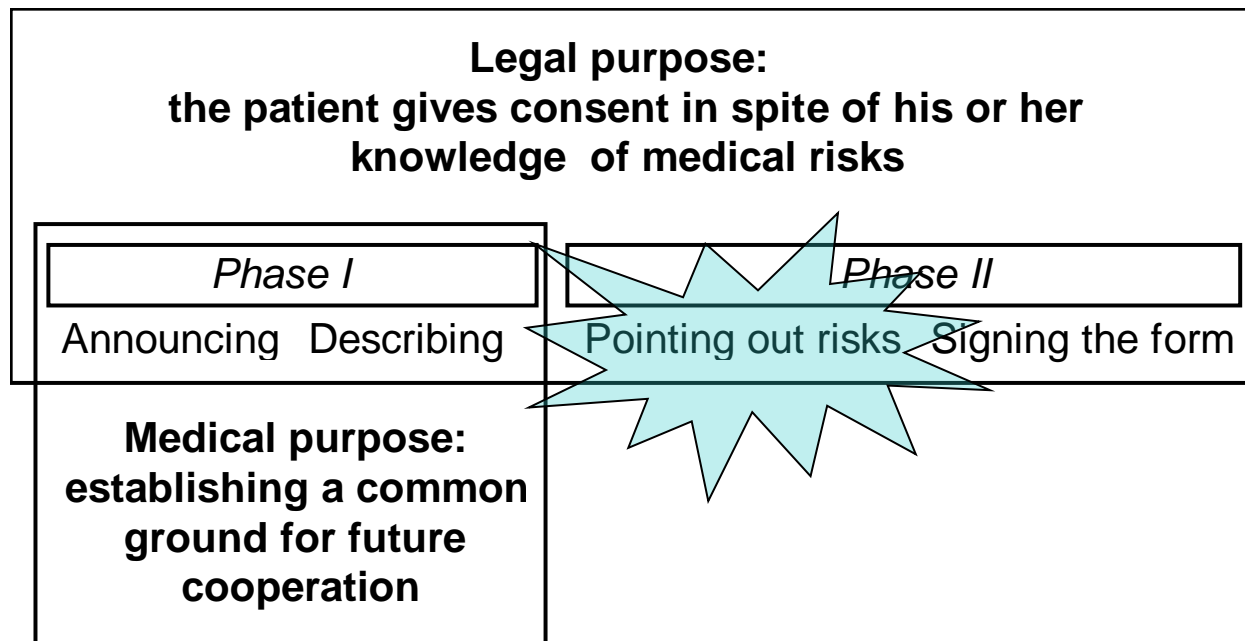
- “DiK” or “K2”-corpus
- 91 interactions, 189 participants
- Four languages: German, Turkish, Portuguese, Spanish
- 160.000 words
- Interpreter-mediated and monolingual communication

# Corpus use

- **Training contents**
  - Communicative challenges of specific constellations
  - Generic and coincidental ingredients
- **Training methods**
  - Dock training materials to communicative experiences of participants
  - Find “pure” or typical cases
  - Find manageable, clearly arranged empirical cases

# Corpus use

- Informed consent



# Corpus use

- Communicating risks

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<b>Announcing a new topic</b> <b>(Obligation to know and/or to say)</b>	<i>You need to know a few things</i> <i>I have to tell you</i>
<b>Describing, naming and/or illustrating risks</b>	<i>You may end up with pneumonia</i> <i>It may bleed</i>
<b>Estimating seriousness and/ or frequency</b>	<i>It does not happen very often</i> <i>It usually wears off on its own</i>

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# Corpus use

- Communicating risks

Doc: One thing I have to tell you: if we take samples and flush liquid in it or something, then it could be that you get a little fever in the afternoon. But this wears off within two or three hours. You'll get a suppository then.

Pat: Mh.

Doc: That's nothing bad. And it doesn't mean anything.

Pat: ((1s)) Good.



# Conclusions

- **Corpus design**
  - General assumptions about institutional communication
  - Participant observation
  - Interviews with informants
- **Corpus use**
  - Identify generic actions and typical communicative challenges
  - Generate training materials close to participants communicative practices
  - Stimulate participants reflections on these communicative practices
  - Procedural knowledge and not declarative knowledge