Interpreting Social Status Through (Mostly First-Person) Pronoun Use

Presented by Kiva Bennett
Sunday, January 29, 2023
1:00pm-5:00pm ET via Zoom

Registration $55 (0.4 PS CEUs) or $40 (No CEUs)
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CW☼☉D
Professional Development
ASL/ENG

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Please have a device available to record your own mock interpretations for personal analysis. You will not be asked to share these recordings with anyone or to analyze anyone else's work besides your own

Human beings constantly co-construct social status relationships. These relationships are not fixed - a supervisor may ask their subordinate for advice about a topic they are not themselves familiar with; a seasoned interpreter may defer to a recent graduate in a particular setting. There is no inherent value in having higher or lower status in any given context, but we do act according to our perceptions of status.

Language is one way we construct and enact our status relationships, and pronouns give us clues about each person's perceptions of status. Pronouns are a subgroup of function words that often go unnoticed in the shadow of content words like nouns and verbs, but their use is linked to where the user's attention is focused. Research has shown that pronouns, specifically first person singular pronouns, subtly signal the perceived relative social status of conversation partners in American English, and there is emerging research suggesting a similar pattern in ASL. This emerging research is my dissertation, currently in progress.

When an interaction is interpreted, the interpreter becomes an additional participant, like it or not. Understanding how pronouns perform status can help interpreters mitigate unintentional misrepresentations of how our consumers perceive one another, better allowing them to co-construct their own social status relationships.

To be clear: The words "pronoun" and "social status" in the title of this workshop may bring to mind the multifaceted social dynamics related to gender-neutral pronouns - a fascinating topic to be sure! And not the topic of this workshop.

DETAILS

- **Workshop approved for 0.4 PS CEUs.**
- **Registration fee is $55 (CEUs) or $40 (No CEUs).**
- No partial CEUs will be given.
- Target audience: Interpreters who are curious about how pronoun use can influence social status in language.
- IRID is an Approved RID CMP Sponsor for continuing education activities. This Professional Studies program is offered for 0.4 CEUs at the Some Content Knowledge Level.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

KIVA BENNETT

Kiva Bennett (NIC) is a Florida native, now living in Washington, DC. She holds an MA in linguistics from Gallaudet and is currently pursuing a PhD in linguistics. Kiva likes to research and to teach. She periodically gets lost down the black hole of procrastination by means of investigation, trying to find ways to enhance her skills. Upon surfacing, she's been known to say, "Hey, I bet other interpreters would love to know this stuff too!" And a workshop is born.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will to able to:
- Analyze pronoun use in recorded conversations by calculating and comparing per-minute rates used by interlocutors.
- Construct informed hypotheses about interlocutor's perceptions of relative social status by analyzing relative pronoun usage rates.
- Analyze their own pronoun use by calculating and comparing per-minute rates in source messages to their own rates in their interpreted target messages.
- Summarize research findings linking pronoun use and social status.
- Design practice activities for reducing pronoun-related intrusions, to include increasing and/or decreasing use as indicated by their own data.

POLICIES

- Accommodation Policy: This workshop will be presented in ASL, any other ADA accommodation requests should be made via email to Cindy @ cwoodpd@gmail.com at least 14 days in advance of the event.
- Cancellation Policy: Participants may contact Cindy at cwoodpd@gmail.com to request a 50% refund or full workshop credit at least 14 days in advance of the event date.
- CWooD Professional Development promotes a learning environment free from discrimination and bias, and encourages mutual respect for all participants.

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