

## **Assessing the Manner of Speech in Australian Virtual Courts and Remote Hearings**

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The manner of speech refers to the way in which the speaker expresses the content of their message in a given context for a specific purpose to a certain audience. The manner of speech speaks volumes about the speakers' socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, and psychological traits. In Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics studies, the manner is often marked by the unique personalised use of linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic features. Common manner-related features include but are not limited to discourse markers (e.g. 'I put it to you', 'well', 'now', 'you know', and 'so'), speech style features (e.g. fillers, hedges, hesitations, false starts, repetitions, and self-repairs), and other features marking the tone of voice, intonation, politeness, formality or register. In Translation and Interpreting Studies, the manner of speech has been long under-researched, particularly in a specialised area of interpreting practices in public service scenarios.

With an overarching aim to increase the awareness of the importance of the manner in high-stake institutionalised courtroom discourses, we resorted to an interdisciplinary mixed-method approach to examine the factors that impact the manner on the overall accuracy of interpreting in virtual courts and remote hearings. Using survey instruments and the experiment conducted with fifty certified professional interpreters, we collected interpreting performance data in connection with their prior knowledge, views, perceptions, strategies, and professional decisions on the reproduction of the manner-related features. Data were first quantitatively analysed with descriptive statistical methods to identify emergent patterns and tendencies. Then quantitative results were triangulated with qualitative data using Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis methods.

Our initial findings suggest a disparity between interpreters in their prior knowledge about the type and the corresponding functions of manner-related features in court discourses, as evidenced by additions, omissions, moderations, softening of the tone of voice, deletions of strong emotional languages, alterations, and substitutions in their renditions.

The contribution of this study is mainly three-fold: (1) to increase the growing awareness of the importance of the manner of speech in interpreter education and continuous professional development; (2) to foster intra-professional solidarity among language interpreter communities; and (3) to cultivate inter-professional understanding and collaboration between the judicial officers and the professional interpreters for effective public service and better legal communication.