



UMR 5191  
Interactions, Corpus, Apprentissages, Représentations

# Developing teachers' semio-pedagogical competence for webconference-supported teaching through teacher training

Cathy Cohen  
ESPE, Lyon 1 University, France



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# Introduction

- Increase in online language courses using webconferencing platforms → reflect on diverse competences required by online teachers (Lamy & Hampel 2007)
- Sensitise teachers to the contribution to meaning-making of semiotic resources (e.g. gestures, head and body posture and movement, facial expressions and gaze)
- Raise teachers' awareness of how multimodal resources combine and how they are orchestrated (Norris 2004)

## Semio-pedagogical competence & critical semiotic awareness

- Semio-pedagogical competence = appropriate use of semiotic resources to foster learning (Guichon & Cohen to appear)
- Developing critical semiotic awareness = “learning to adjust one’s communication to the constraints of a technology” (Guichon & Wigham to appear)
- Contribution to meaning-making of the webcam (Cohen & Guichon 2014)

## Affordances of the webcam

- Participants have access to their own image through the webcam → increases awareness of actions (Yamada & Akahori 2009)
- Attention to framing (Guichon & Wigham to appear)
- Exaggeration of facial expressions (Cosnier & Develotte 2011)



## Context – telecollaborative ISMAEL project

- 12 trainee teachers on a Master's in French as a foreign language in Lyon (France)
- Online teaching module
- 18 1st year undergraduate business students in Dublin studying Global Business
- Online class is 1 element in a French for business module (B1-B2 level)
- Preparation for 6-month internship in France in 2<sup>nd</sup> year

## Structure of French online teaching module

- 4 preparatory training sessions
- 6 weekly **synchronous online interactions** each lasting 30 to 45 minutes, webconferencing platform *VISU* (Guichon, Bétrancourt & Prié 2012)
- Retrospection room in *VISU* to **rewatch online sessions** and prepare multimodal feedback reports for learners
- 6 **group debriefings** the following day led by a teacher trainer, lasting around 1 hour 45 minutes
  - **Setting of personal pedagogical objectives (explicit or implicit) by trainees**

## Research data

- Video recordings of 6 sessions with 1 trainee teacher, **Adèle**, transcribed with ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg 2008)
- Audio recordings and transcriptions of group debriefings
- Adèle's end of course written analysis

## Adèle's pedagogical objectives

1. Implicit pedagogical objective in which she expresses displeasure about her over expressive facial expressions and constant smiling (Debriefing session 2)
2. Explicit pedagogical objective relates to a desire to improve her positioning in front of the webcam (Debriefing session 3)



## Research questions

- How do the trainee teacher's framing and facial expressions evolve over the 6 sessions?
- How does her framing position impact on how other multimodal resources are deployed?
- Once the teacher identifies a problem in the debriefing session, to what extent does she modify how she teaches?

# Framing continuum

Extreme close-up

Close-up face

Close-up head  
and shoulders

Head and  
shoulders

Head and  
torso

# Session 1

Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%

## Extract session 1

Generally close to the screen, moves closer to hear better; rarely still

Touches hair, microphone

Constant smile & frequent laughter

Gestures only partially visible or too close to webcam to be meaningful

Gaze direction central but occasionally looks at lesson plan on left of her screen to guide her

**Adèle** Et j'ai remarque que les gens qui buvait du thé, ils sont plus calmes

**Catriona** (rires)

**Adèle** Et les gens qui boivent le du café ils sont plus: c'est des tempéraments plus excités (rire)

**Catriona** (rires) Ouais

**Alannah** Ont ont beaucoup d'energie c'est ça

**Adèle** OUI c'est ça

**Alannah** (rires)

**Adèle** Donc on aime le café parce qu'on veut garder l'energie (rire)

**Alannah** (rires) "yeah" (rires)

**Catriona** (rires) oui

**Adèle** et euh vous avez une machine à café et à thé à l'école? Une machine?

**Alannah** On a euh on a un Starbucks

**Adèle** Une quoi? UN STARBUCKS? Wow j'adore.

## Session 2

	Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
<b>1</b>	0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%
<b>2</b>	<b>0.11%</b>	<b>11.28%</b>	<b>77.12%</b>	<b>2.52%</b>	<b>8.99%</b>

## Debriefing session 2

1	<i>Trainer</i>	I watched how you positioned your cameras.... <i>I watched Adèle...and I watched how your camera was positioned and actually, Adèle, we can see you close-up</i> .... whereas Victor's in a medium-long shoot ("en plan américain") where we see his shoulders.... I'm guessing you deliberately chose to do that...
2	<i>Victor</i>	No, not at all...
3	<i>Adèle</i>	It comes from the computers, I think.. In any case, <b>you can't decide on a Mac.</b>
4	<i>Trainer</i>	You see yourself and you just see your head?
5	<i>Adèle</i>	You look really big on Mac, even on Skype.
6	<i>Trainer</i>	(.....) Anyway, maybe try <i>to pay a bit more attention to that because I don't think you communicate the same thing, in the same way, in a close-up or a medium-long shot.</i>

## Debriefing session 2

Adèle

I've noticed *I pull all kinds of faces*, when I rewatch the sessions... Oh, what is going on here? My face is really expressive....  
And so, *it's a nightmare*, you know... I try to speak with my face all the time so *pull loads of faces and smile*, you know like here I am!

## Session 3

	Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
<b>1</b>	0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%
<b>2</b>	0.11%	11.28%	77.12%	2.52%	8.99%
<b>3</b>	-	<b>15.22%</b>	<b>66.19%</b>	<b>13.13%</b>	<b>5.46%</b>



## Debriefing session 3

Trainer

There's a real *saturation of the image* (....). *You're really close!* You should all *be a bit more attentive towards this* (....). *At the start of the session, I think you should all make sure that you're sufficiently* (....). It's good that they can see your lips moving but, at the same time, *they don't have access to other gestures which are also important* (....)

If you look at Victor, you see he's *in a medium-long shot* ("en plan américain"). We have access to his gestures, other things like that, and oddly, *I find it less intimidating* (....).

This is really *something that you need to master. And it's not easy. Just be careful about this next time.*

## Debriefing session 3

Adèle

Actually we all have the same problem. Maybe too close or (....) ***Yesterday, I tried to move back but it felt as if I was weakening the connection (....) like if I move back, I'm further away, so that gives me the impression of not being able to hear so well. And that's not true!*** And as soon as they speak, I get closer, like this, and then you can only see my eye.... It's like I have to hear you (....) So ***I think we really have to work on this, tell ourselves there's no link between our distance from the computer and how well we hear them and they hear us.***

## Session 4

	Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
<b>1</b>	0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%
<b>2</b>	0.11%	11.28%	77.12%	2.52%	8.99%
<b>3</b>	-	15.22%	66.19%	13.13%	5.46%
<b>4</b>	-	<b>0.46%</b>	<b>0.62%</b>	<b>12.17%</b>	<b>86.75%</b>

## Extract session 4

**Adèle** Ah, donc il y a quand même eu des petites situations qui auraient pu euh être un conflit mais qui ne sont pas devenues.

**Catriona** Hum pardon?

**Adèle** En fait il y a quand même eu euh, dans un travail d'équipe, il y a toujours des personnes qui travaillent plus que les autres.

**Catriona** Oui

**Adèle** Ou ceux ou qui sont plus en retard ou (.) plein de choses.

Head and torso position
Calm facial expression
Doesn't touch headphones / microphone
Certain co-verbal gestures clearly visible and potentially helpful
Visibility of contextual elements

## Session 5 – Adèle at home

	Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
<b>1</b>	0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%
<b>2</b>	0.11%	11.28%	77.12%	2.52%	8.99%
<b>3</b>	-	15.22%	66.19%	13.13%	5.46%
<b>4</b>	-	0.46%	0.62%	12.17%	86.75%
<b>5</b>	-	<b>6.39%</b>	<b>33.39%</b>	<b>46.89%</b>	<b>13.33%</b>

## Session 6 – Adèle with just 1 student

	Extreme close-up	Close-up face	Close-up head and shoulders	Head and shoulders	Head and torso
<b>1</b>	0.34%	11%	54.61%	33.48%	0.58%
<b>2</b>	0.11%	11.28%	77.12%	2.52%	8.99%
<b>3</b>	-	15.22%	66.19%	13.13%	5.46%
<b>4</b>	-	0.46%	0.62%	12.17%	86.75%
<b>5</b>	-	6.39%	33.39%	46.89%	13.33%
<b>6</b>	<b>0.05%</b>	<b>0.78%</b>	<b>22.86%</b>	<b>69.42%</b>	<b>6.89%</b>

RQ 1: *How do the trainee teacher's framing and facial expressions evolve over the 6 sessions?*

- Framing positions and facial expressions evolve, but discontinuously
  - Multimodal communication involves switching between modes in simultaneous and sometimes competing tasks (Guichon et al. 2012)
  - “Polyfocality of attention” (Scollon et al. 1999; Jones 2004)
- ➔ Monitoring self-image = 1 aspect of dynamic process of meaning-making (Ciekanski and Chanier 2008)

Ciekanski, M. & Chanier, T. (2008) 'Developing online multimodal verbal communication to enhance the writing process in an audio-graphic conferencing environment', *ReCALL*, 20 (2): 162-182.

Guichon, N., Bétrancourt, M. & Prié, Y. (2012) 'Managing written and oral negative feedback in a synchronous online teaching situation', *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 25 (2): 181-197.

Jones R. (2004) « The problem of Context in Computer Mediated Communication », dans Levine P. & Scollon R., *Discourse & Technology multimodal discourse analysis*, Georgetown, University Press, p. 20-33.

Scollon, R., Bhatia, V., Li, D. & Yung, V. (1999) 'Blurred genres and fuzzy identities in Hong Kong public discourse: Foundational ethnographic issues in the study of reading', *Applied Linguistics*, 20 (1): 22-43.

RQ 2: *How does her framing position impact on how other multimodal resources are deployed?*

- Framing choices impact on how other multimodal resources are deployed:
  - Visibility of gestures (meaning making?)
  - Degree of social presence – e.g. direction of gaze, ‘size’ of facial expressions, head movements



RQ 3: *Once the teacher identifies a problem in the debriefing session, to what extent does she modify how she teaches?*

- Identifying a problem is a key step in being able to modify one's performance
- Consciousness-raising through teacher training and self-confrontation help trainee-teachers develop critical semiotic awareness and semio-pedagogical competence

## Final words from Adèle....

*The retrospection tool (in VISU) enables us to step back and watch the sessions again. The real benefit of this tool is precisely that it enables us to notice things we're unaware of during the interactions so we can then work on them and correct them in a teaching situation and consequently acquire new skills*

*The debriefings were so important and were one of the highpoints of the course. They give us the opportunity to hear the questions other students are asking themselves which often mirror our own doubts, and then we can answer them together, making suggestions and this really adds to our own personal reflection.*

Cathy Cohen : [catherine.cohen@univ-lyon1.fr](mailto:catherine.cohen@univ-lyon1.fr)

*The ISMAEL project was supported by grants from:*

- *ENS Lyon through a « Projet émergent »*
- *Campus France through the Franco-Irish Ulysses programme*
- *LABEX ASLAN (ANR-10-LABX-0081) of the University of Lyon through the « Investissements d'Avenir » programme (ANR-11-IDEX-0007).*

*And thanks to Ben Holt, Julie Vidal and Thomas Debay for the ELAN verbal transcriptions.*