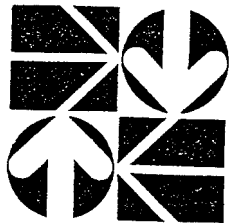


STUDENT COMPETENCIES: DEFINING, TEACHING, AND EVALUATING

Proceedings of the Ninth National Convention
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Elizabeth A. Winston
Editor

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Winston, E.A.- Editor

Student Competencies:

Defining, Teaching, and Evaluating

Editor's Foreword

The 1992 convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers was, as always, a wonderful opportunity for learning and sharing information, as well as for meeting friends both old and new. The theme of the convention, "Student Competencies: Defining, Teaching, and Evaluating," was addressed both globally and specifically by the presentations throughout the convention. Each presentation added to our collective knowledge; each built on and added to the previous presentation. All of these presentations, and all of the people who participated in the convention, shared their experience, knowledge, and insight into interpreting and teaching interpreting.

It is due to the following people that the Convention and this volume are possible:

Carol Patrie--for her energy and expertise in organizing the convention;

Risa Shaw--who, as Program Chair, coordinated the presentations presented in this volume;

Robert Hahn--who helped with the final proofing;

Mary Wright--for her help in the printing;

Tracy FitzPatrick--for her help with the preparation of this volume;

and

The Presenters, for the time and energy they shared in preparing both their presentations and their manuscripts.

Elizabeth A. Winston, Editor

Mission Statement

The CIT recognizes the minority status of D/deaf people and the long history of linguistic and cultural oppression they have endured. We therefore publicly proclaim our respect and support for D/deaf people's right to self-determination and true communication access.

The mission of the CIT is to promote quality education for interpreters working with American Sign Language and English (including English-influenced forms of signing).

As a professional association of interpreter educators, the CIT:

- provides opportunities for the professional development of interpreter educators.
- serves as a vehicle for sharing information among interpreter educators.
- promotes high standards in institutions, faculties, programs and curricula for the education of interpreters.
- advocates for research relevant to the practice and instruction of interpretation.
- encourages collegial relationships with professionals in other related disciplines and organizations.

The CIT welcomes participation by other educators of foreign signed languages, foreign spoken languages and other professionals who feel an affinity for our goals and an interest in our activities.

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STUDENT COMPETENCIES IN INTERPRETING:

DEFINING, TEACHING AND EVALUATING

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INTRODUCTION

Translational competency has been defined by Wolfram Wilss (1976) as "the ability to reproduce technical, common language and literary texts adequately in the target language." This definition of written translation competency, vague as it may be, can be used as a starting point for determination of interpretation competency.

Interpretation competency can thus be said to be the ability to orally reproduce technical, common language and literary discourse adequately in the target language. This overall interpretation competency, which consists therefore of all the skills and knowledge that an interpreter needs to adequately reproduce a message orally in the target language, will serve as the basis for identifying the competencies that interpreter trainees need to acquire and for proposing methods of teaching and evaluating these competencies.

1. SPECIFICATION OF INTERPRETATION COMPETENCY

Overall interpretation competency as defined above can be broken down roughly into the following categories on the basis of an analysis of the interpretation process: (1) language competency; (2) transfer competency; (3) methodological competency; (4) subject matter competency; (5) bi-cultural competency; and (6) sense of professionalism. Each of these individual competencies will be briefly examined below, before the competencies that interpreter trainees should have are discussed.

1.1 Language competency

Language competency, which covers the ability to manipulate with ease and accuracy the two languages involved in the interpreting process, is a prerequisite for successful interpreting of a message, for the message is mediated through language. It can be further divided into two main subcategories:

- (a) ability to understand the source language in all its nuances;
- (b) ability to express oneself correctly, fluently, clearly and with poise in the target language.

While voice interpreters have the luxury in some situations - for instance, while doing simultaneous in the booth - of using one language constantly as the source language and the other as the target language, sign language interpreters are generally called upon to work in both directions (Sign Language to Spoken Language and Spoken Language to Sign Language). They therefore need an excellent passive and active knowledge of both their working languages.

1.2 Transfer competency

Transfer competency, while implying language competency, is nevertheless distinct from it. This is clearly revealed by the fact that not everyone who knows two languages well is capable of interpreting professionally. Transfer competency involves much more than merely understanding the gist of the message and conveying it as best one can into another language. It includes the following capacities:

- (a) ability to understand the articulation of meaning in the source language discourse;
- (b) ability to render the meaning of the source language discourse in the target

language accurately (i.e. without distortions, additions or omissions);

(c) ability to transfer a message from a source language into a target language without undue influence of the source language;

(d) ability to transfer a message from a source language into a target language appropriately from the point of view of style.

1.3 Methodological competency

Methodological competency in interpretation covers two different aspects, one involving the modes of interpretation, the other, terminology.

- (a) ability to be able to use different modes of interpreting (simultaneous, consecutive);
- (b) ability to choose the appropriate mode in a given setting;
- (c) ability to do relay interpreting, when necessary;
- (d) ability to find pertinent lexical and terminological data, to evaluate it and to use it judiciously;
- (e) ability to record pertinent lexical and terminological data correctly for future use.

1.4 Subject matter competency

Subject matter competency covers the knowledge required to understand the content of a message being interpreted, since one cannot interpret what one does not comprehend. It involves

(a) wide general knowledge to be able to interpret general discourse covering several fields;
(b) sufficient specialized knowledge of one or two disciplines to be able to interpret more specialized discourse in these disciplines.

1.5 Bi-cultural competency

Bi-cultural competency, which consists of a deep knowledge and appreciation of the cultures underlying the working languages, is based on the concept that language is a reflection of culture and that true understanding of a message involves not only a mastery of the language in which it is expressed but of the culture the language represents. Bi-cultural competency has the following components:
(a) knowledge of the basic beliefs, values, experiences and behaviours characteristic of source language speakers and target language speakers;
(b) appreciation of the differences between the source language culture and the target language culture.

1.6 Technical competency

Finally, the interpreter must acquire the technical competency required to perform adequately. Technical competency covers
(a) ability to position oneself appropriately for interpretation;

(b) ability to use a microphone appropriately;
(c) ability to work with *ear* phones (in relay) when necessary.

The components identified above for each of these competencies can be further subdivided. Thus the ability to understand the articulation of meaning in the source language discourse, which is an element of language competency, involves (a) the ability to understand all the ideas contained in discourse, (b) the ability to distinguish principal ideas and secondary ideas, and (c) the ability to determine the links between principal ideas and between principal ideas and their related secondary ideas.

It thus becomes clear that the rather nebulous concept of interpreting competency which was the starting point of this paper can, in fact, be fleshed out and made very detailed if one analyzes in depth the various skills and knowledge required during the interpretation process. Interpretation competency can be further specified by identifying for each of the abilities isolated above the minimum level of ability required. This is a far more difficult task, for qualifications such as "perfectly", "well", "excellent", and "good" are too subject to differing interpretations to be truly useful. Identification of the level of abilities can be based, at least partially, on the analysis of successful

performances in professional accreditation examinations. For example, by analyzing the maximum number of language errors, transfer errors, etc., found in "passing" exams, it would be possible to indicate that language competency (or a component thereof) would be deemed "satisfactory" if there were no more than X number of Y type of errors in the interpretation of a general (or specialized) text of Z length. However, this type of work still remains to be done and therefore the evaluation of abilities, even of professionals, remains subjective to a large extent. This renders the definition of student competencies more ambiguous.

2. DEFINING STUDENT COMPETENCIES

Interpretation competency in the context of interpreter training can be considered from two different perspectives: the end-of-programme perspective and the in-programme perspective. Each of these perspectives gives rise to two questions: (a) what competencies should the interpreter trainee have acquired at the stage of training under consideration (end of the programme or major turning point in the programme)? and (b) what level of ability should he have acquired for each category of competency at the stage of training under consideration (end of the programme or major turning point in the

programme)? Both perspectives and both questions need to be considered if student competencies are to be clearly delimited.

2.1 End-of-Programme competencies

The end-of-programme competencies must be determined by what the profession expects of beginning interpreters. By profession I mean not only the professional association(s) but also the marketplace, for there may well be a contradiction between the expectations of the two: for instance, the professional association may prefer beginning interpreters to have sound language, transfer, methodological and bi-cultural competencies, even if this is at the expense of subject matter and technical competencies, whereas the work market may require beginning interpreters to have acquired all competencies, even if the level of attainment is not that high.

First, using as a starting point a listing of competencies required of professional interpreters (cf. Section 1 above), a parallel list of competencies expected of beginning interpreters must be drawn up on the basis of discussions with the professional association and major employers. This list may vary from one region to another, depending on several factors: the possibility of further training and continuing education; the organization of the profession in the **area;**

the quality of interpreting services already provided in the area, etc.

Next, an attempt should be made to determine the minimum level of ability required for each competency. This is a difficult task, since, given the general lack of precision concerning the level of abilities required of professional interpreters, programme administrators cannot proceed simply by a lowering of the level. In other words, they cannot use the following logic: certified interpreters are allowed a maximum of 2 errors of style in the target language for the interpretation of a general discourse of 500 words; it takes on average two years of practice as an interpreter to pass the certification exam - two years during which their level of ability will improve; therefore, we will expect graduating students to make a maximum of 6 errors of style in the interpretation of a general discourse of 500 words. Such determination of the level of competency will have to wait until the level of competency required for professional certification is more clearly defined. Meanwhile, there are other ad hoc methods of level determination which can be tried. One such method presumes the existence of taped end-of-programme exams, which are evaluated by professionals: a thorough examination of the taped exams and comparison of the pass/fail results could yield some interesting (although not necessarily

statistical) results. Another method would be observation of beginning interpreters at work and a necessarily subjective evaluation of their level of competencies. The problem with this method, however, is not only its subjectivity, but also its presumption that all beginning interpreters meet certain basic criteria: we have all heard horror stories about a neighbour or court clerk with some knowledge of **ASL** being asked to interpret because no one else was available!

The third and final step in defining end-of-programme competencies is to consider the results of the first two steps (identification of all the competencies expected of beginning interpreters and identification of the level of each competency) in terms of the length of the interpreter training programme, the prerequisites required for entering the programme, and the academic level at which the programme is offered. It is obvious that all competencies cannot be taught in a 2-year programme, especially if such a programme does not require as a prerequisite a high enough level of the two working languages to eliminate the need for much training for acquisition of language competency. On the other hand, if the interpreter training programme is a 2-year graduate level programme with strict language prerequisites, a higher level of transfer, methodological, bi-

cultural and technical competencies *can* be attained, for the language competency and some degree of subject matter competency can be taken as given.

From the above discussion, it should be clear that end-of-programme competencies will vary from one programme to another. The only way to establish the same end-of-programme competencies from one school to another would be (a) to draw up a common list of competencies expected of beginning interpreters on the basis of discussions with major professional associations (but not with major employers); (b) to establish, somewhat arbitrarily, the level of ability to be attained for each competency; and (c) to set up programmes of the same length, at the same level, with the same prerequisites, which can adopt the common end-of-programme competencies determined by steps (a) and (b).

Such harmonization of end-of-programme competencies is not only unrealistic, but also unnecessary. For not all interpreting situations require exactly the same blend of competencies at the same level. For instance, educational interpreting for a hearing-disabled student at the college or university level requires excellent English comprehension skills and ASL expressive skills, but can be adequately performed with a lower level of English expressive skills since the lecture format often employed at this

level does not call for much "public" communication between the hearing-impaired student and the teacher.

However, educational interpreting at the school level, where classroom work involves active participation on the part of all students, would call for excellent comprehension and expressive skills in both English and ASL on the part of the interpreter.

The problem with differing end-of-programme competencies is ensuring that these differences are understood by employers and that graduates are given interpreting assignments that are in keeping with their end-of-programme competencies. This problem could be resolved by adopting a national system such as the one in operation in Australia, where the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) has established five levels of interpreting and translating, set up uniform tests for these levels and approved training programmes for different levels (Gentile 1985). Each of the levels of interpreting identified is defined in terms of the kind of interpreting or translating (and therefore, indirectly, the competencies) that can be expected from those accredited at that level; thus, Level I interpreters are language aides, who use their linguistic skills as an adjunct to their principal duties: their competence is therefore defined in terms of handling simple

conversation and some questions and answers. Such a system clearly identifies the level of competency for which each educational programme is preparing students; end-of-programme competencies are thus, to a large extent, out of the hands of the training programmes. It also ensures, by its uniform levels, that employers are fully informed of what can be expected from graduating students.

2.2 In-programme competencies

Whether end-of-programme competencies are determined by some outside body such as NAATI or by the programme administrators, the **task** of establishing competencies to be attained at each stage of the programme (which, for lack of a better term, I have labeled "in-programme competencies") falls upon programme administrators and educators.

First, the stages of the interpreter education process must be identified in terms of both the end-of-programme competencies and the programme prerequisites. Thus, for instance, language competency, which will be an element of all programmes, will require special attention prior to work on other competencies if there are no or very minimal language prerequisites; in such a case, the interpreting programme will consist of two main stages: the language acquisition stage and the stage where interpretation competencies proper (other

than basic language acquisition) are acquired. When basic language competency is a prerequisite or once basic language competency has been acquired, stages can be identified in terms of the type and level of ability to be acquired for each competency during a given period (semester or academic year). Thus, for instance, one could decide to work on partial acquisition of all the abilities outlined in Section 1 in Year 1 of a two-year programme (with language prerequisites); or one could decide to work on full acquisition of certain abilities (such as knowledge of the basic beliefs, values, experiences and behaviours characteristic of source language speakers and target language speakers), leave the acquisition of a few abilities entirely for the second year (e.g. the abilities relating to technical competency), and aim at partial acquisition of the remaining abilities.

The terms "full acquisition" and "partial acquisition", ambiguous as they may seem, can be made very precise if the end-of-programme competencies have been properly defined from the point of view of level. Thus, for example, if the ability to understand the nuances of the source language (language competency) must, by the end of the programme, have reached the point where a maximum of two linguistic meaning errors are committed per 100 words (or 2 minutes of signed discourse), then full acquisition

means that the majority of students in the class should commit no more than that number of that type of error. Partial acquisition of an ability would be determined by the number of educational stages fixed: in a 2-year programme where two main stages of a year each have been identified, partial acquisition of the same ability just discussed would involve committing no more than **4-6** errors of linguistic meaning per 100 words (or 2 minutes of signed discourse). Thus, acquisition of abilities at different stages can be made more specific by quantification.

The abilities to be acquired at any given stage should be the basis for setting up specific courses to be offered during that period. In establishing courses in terms of abilities to be acquired, the following points should be borne in mind: (a) the same ability can be worked on from different points of view in different courses; (b) it is not necessary to have distinct courses to cover each ability or even competency; and (c) many, if not most, courses will work on several abilities at the same time. What is important is the clear identification of in-programme competencies and the appropriate division of the teaching of these abilities between the various courses.

3. TEACHING INTERPRETING COMPETENCIES

Since interpreting involves a variety of abilities rather than a specific content, courses in the interpreting programme are better described by the abilities taught than by attempting to specify content topics.

3.1 Teaching by ability-related objectives

Teaching interpreting competencies through a specific course involves transforming the abilities to be taught into specific course objectives. In other words, the course objectives are based, on the one hand, on the end-of-programme competencies and, on the other, on the in-programme competencies listed for that particular stage of the programme. Since the objectives of every course are established in the same manner, those of a specific course also have a direct link with courses that precede, that run simultaneously and that follow.

Let us take as an example the second of a series of four interpreting courses, run on a semestrial basis over two years. The end of the second course would thus mark the half-way point in the programme. In other words, by the end of this course, the students should be at least 50% of the way towards full acquisition of all interpretation competencies. Let us also presume that this course has been preceded not only by

an introductory interpreting course, but also by advanced courses on **ASL** and English and by a deaf culture course.

Since the abilities to be inculcated during this course, as in most interpreting courses, include all but those related to technical competency, specialized subject matter competency, and some specific methodological abilities, the list of objectives will necessarily be long. But since many of the same abilities have been worked on not only through the first interpreting course but also through other more narrowly focused courses, the objectives will not be as formidable as they may appear to be at first sight. They may be stated as follows:

(a) To be able to understand a five-minute discourse in **ASL** and in English on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, without any misunderstanding of the main idea(s) and no more than 5 errors in the interpretation of secondary ideas.

(b) To be able to express oneself for five minutes in **ASL** and English on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, in neutral register, making no more than 5 structural errors and 5 vocabulary errors.

(c) To be able to reproduce in schematic form all the main ideas and the secondary ideas, along with their links, of a five-minute discourse in **ASL** and in English on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events.

(d) To be able to interpret from **ASL** into English and from English into **ASL** the meaning of a two-minute discourse on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, making no more than 4 errors of distortion, addition or omission of meaning.

(e) To be able to interpret from **ASL** into English and from English into **ASL** the meaning of a two-minute discourse on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, making no more than three interference errors.

(f) To be able to interpret from **ASL** into English and from English into **ASL** the meaning of a two-minute discourse, in neutral or informal register, on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, maintaining overall the register of the original discourse.

(g) To be able to interpret in the consecutive mode from **ASL** into English and from English into **ASL** taking no more than twice as long as the original speaker.

(h) To research English and **ASL** vocabulary on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, to evaluate it and choose the best terms and equivalents.

(i) To record for future use the English and **ASL** vocabulary researched on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events.

(j) To read and watch video tapes and T.V. programmes on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, to widen general knowledge in these areas.

(k) To identify some of the basic beliefs, values, experiences and behaviours characteristic of **ASL** and English speakers in areas such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events.

(l) To be able to take into consideration during interpretation any differences between the basic beliefs, values, experiences and behaviours characteristic of **ASL** and English speakers in areas such

as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events.

What would distinguish the objectives of this course from those of the previous and subsequent interpreting courses would primarily be the topics of interpretation and the margin of error allowed.

3.2 Teaching activities

While the general goal of such a course is to have students develop and improve their overall interpretation competency, it is clear that all these objectives cannot be attained only by having students interpret discourse after discourse. That is because straight interpretation requires the more or less simultaneous use of all the abilities underlying the objectives presented above, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to improve them all at the same time or to focus more on one than another. Hence, in addition to straight interpretation exercises, other activities must be developed to work on specific objectives.

Let us take as an example one specific objective and consider a certain number of activities that could be used to achieve that objective. The objective that will serve as an illustration here is Objective a: To be able to understand a five-minute discourse in ASL and in

English on general topics such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events, without any misunderstanding of the main idea(s) and no more than 5 errors in the interpretation of secondary ideas.

This objective can be worked on through the following activities (among many others):

(a) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have them do a written comprehension exercise (multiple choice or questions and short answers) on the main ideas and secondary ideas.

(b) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have them summarize the main ideas in one or two sentences (orally or in writing) in the same language.

(c) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have them jot down the main ideas and

secondary ideas in point form, clearly distinguishing between the two types of ideas.

(d) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have them paraphrase the ideas (all if possible) in the same language.

(e) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have them summarize the main ideas in one or two sentences in the other language.

(f) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then ask them questions in the other language and have them answer the questions in that language.

(g) Have students listen to a short tape in English or watch a short video in **ASL** or English on a general topic such as the family, school life, personal problems, and current events. Then have

them present the main ideas in the other language.

Note that the activities become progressively more complex, with abilities other than straight comprehension of the source discourse coming into play: for example, activities d, e, f, and g involve greater ability to express oneself in a language; and activities e, f, and g involve limited transfer abilities. But the focus remains throughout on the comprehension of the source language discourse, and the inclusion of other abilities is very gradual. Nevertheless, the final activity is already a good preparation for straight interpretation.

Even during straight interpretation activities, attention should initially be placed on one or two specific abilities over others. In fact, the same text or very similar texts may be used in sequence with the students concentrating each time on improving one ability and then working on another while retaining the improvement acquired for abilities previously worked on.

Unfortunately, there is not as yet, to the best of my knowledge, a published teaching manual covering various activities for the development of interpretation competency -although detailed syllabi including a description of proposed activities have been prepared for certain specific courses at certain

institutions. Thus, it is generally up to the instructor to use his imagination to create suitable activities, as well as the materials required for these activities.

3.3 Integrating; the different interpretation courses into a whole

It has already been pointed out that all courses should be linked via the in-programme and end-of-programme competencies. However, it takes more than objectives to link a series of courses into a whole. And yet the integration of different courses in an interpretation programme is a must, if interpretation competency, which is a composite and multidimensional capacity is to be adequately developed.

Various ways may be conceived to achieve synchronization of interpreting courses per se on the one hand and of the latter and other interpretation-related courses (e.g. courses on deaf culture, on ASL) on the other. Some of them are discussed below.

- (a) Using the same or similar materials either in complementary courses at the same level or in similar courses at different levels - e.g. using discourse on a deaf person's relations with his hearing parents both in a course on deaf culture and in an interpreting course.

This policy, which also reduces each individual instructor's

materials preparation time, has the advantage of having the students use familiar materials for new activities for the attainment of different or enhanced objectives. (b) Using the same or similar activities in interpreting courses at different levels. The repetition of activities is the only way to reinforce and improve certain abilities. Hence there is much to be said for repeating certain activities done in Interpreting I in subsequent interpreting courses. However, in such cases, new materials should be used and the objectives should be enhanced.

(c) Making direct links between what has been taught in concurrent courses in the previous week - e.g. follow up a discussion, in the deaf culture course, of a deaf person's relations with his hearing parent with a straight interpretation exercise on that topic.

Links made in these and other ways between the various components of an interpretation programme will ensure that students see the interrelationship of the various skills and knowledge and the different levels of skills and knowledge which comprise interpretation

competency and which are taught through many distinct courses.

4. EVALUATING INTERPRETATION COMPETENCY

Evaluation in interpreting courses (other interpretation-related courses are not considered here) should focus on both the acquisition of individual competencies and the ability to combine individual competencies in interpretation performance. In addition, it should be both diagnostic and summative.

4.1 Evaluating individual competencies

Individual competencies need constant evaluation. This can range from teacher feedback on specific ability-related activities to student self-evaluation to peer evaluation to formal evaluation through a test.

Teacher feedback on specific ability-related activities is diagnostic in nature: it is intended to point out to the student the particular problems he has relating to a given ability and to suggest to him ways in which he can work on these problems. Such feedback can be given directly in the classroom, immediately following a class activity, or can be based on practice exercises submitted on tape by the student once a week. Two points to bear in mind during such feedback are (a) to avoid critiquing a variety of competencies at once; and

(b) to **provide** not only a critique **but** also suggestions for improvement.

Student self-evaluation of individual competencies, also a diagnostic form of evaluation, **is an** excellent way of **gradually** developing the **student's judgment**. Some exercises (such as **a, b, c, and f** in Section 3.2 above) lend themselves more easily **to** self-evaluation on the basis of proposed responses and a correction code supplied by the instructor. Others (such **as d** in Section 3.2 above) will require careful and objective analysis by the **student** of his **work**. The latter type **of** self-evaluation would need a follow **up** either through teacher feedback on the student evaluation **or by** peer evaluation.

Peer evaluation, i.e. evaluation **of** one **student's work** by another, encourages student cooperation and sharing of knowledge if it is undertaken in the **right spirit**. Activities that lend themselves to several possible **responses** (such as **d** in Section 3.2 above) **are** the kind that would **benefit** from peer evaluation, **for** students can share **their** responses **and** jointly come up with better ones.

The instructor **should provide** additional exercises **and** materials that students **can** use **as required for** self-evaluation and peer evaluation. Moreover, he should gradually increase both the **level of** difficulty **of** the exercises and the criteria for evaluation

from one exercise *to* another. These **steps should** allow the student to be adequately prepared for the summative evaluation of individual competencies.

Summative evaluation **of** individual competencies **can** be **done** through **short but** formal tests **administered during** the semester. Each of these formal **tests** may focus on more *than* one course objective (i.e. more *than* one specific ability) if they are very closely related (e.g. objectives **a** and **c** in Section 3.1). This will avoid the proliferation of such tests that **take away** valuable class time. Another way **of** handling summative tests **of** individual competencies **arid, at** the same time, saving precious class time is to organize individualized testing, with each student **expected** to do a certain number **of** summative tests relating to individual competencies before the end **of the term**. Such an arrangement, **while** often complicated **to** organize, would allow students to improve **individual** competencies **at their own rate**. The criteria **for** the summative evaluation of individual competencies **should, in** principle, be included in the presentation of the course objectives (e.g. the objective " To be able to express **oneself** for five minutes in ASL and English on general topics **such as** the family, school life, personal problems, **and** current events, in neutral register; making no more than 5 structural errors and 5

vocabulary errors" contains within it the exact criteria used for evaluation). So, if the course objectives are well-prepared, the students should know precisely how they are going to be judged.

4.2 Evaluating the ability to combine individual competencies

However, interpretation involves a combination of abilities. Hence, evaluation of the student's capacity to effect such a combination has to be evaluated through interpretation performance.

The methods of teacher feedback, self-evaluation and peer evaluation discussed above can be used again for diagnostic interpretation evaluation. However, the instructor will have to ensure that self-evaluation and peer evaluation take into consideration all the abilities covered in the course objectives. Students should be encouraged to note the number of different types of errors they have made during the interpretation and to work towards reducing the number. But since it is difficult to provide one "correct" version for interpretation exercises, more teacher feedback will be required in this case to supplement self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

At least three summative evaluations of interpretation performance should take place during the semester. Obviously, the level of difficulty of the

source discourse will be lower in the first two tests than in the third, and the criteria specified for individual competencies which make up overall interpretation competency will be applied more leniently at the start. However, by the third test, the precise criteria for individual competencies indicated in the course objectives should be applied in the evaluation of interpretation performance.

4.3 The role of subjectivity in the evaluation of interpretation performance

Throughout this paper I have insisted on the necessity of having precise and even quantifiable objectives to provide precise and quantifiable criteria for evaluating interpretation competency. However, we have all heard overall very good interpretations which contain a large number of small errors and we have also been given the impression of a very poor interpretation by one major error. So it is evident that interpretation performance cannot be judged only on a quantitative basis.

Subjectivity in the form of overall impression must therefore be given a place in summative evaluation. But to avoid the oft-repeated pitfalls of such subjectivity, it should be limited. I suggest that no more than 20% of the grade for summative evaluation be based on impression; thus, 80% at least of the final grade will be clearly transparent to the student. Such transparency is essential

if he is to improve and develop and not waste his energy trying to second guess what will please one instructor as opposed to another.

CONCLUSION

Interpretation, like translation, involves a multidimensional competency that is hard to define and to teach, and even harder to evaluate. It is no doubt because of the difficulty of the enterprise that there are no teacher's manuals for the training and evaluation of interpreters. However, the reality is that we are training interpreters and our graduates are proof that this can be done. So it is time for us instructors to reflect on our teaching, to see what we have done, what has worked well and why. We should then share the fruits of our experiences and reflections with others in the form of detailed syllabi to begin with, and exercise books and training manuals at a later stage. This paper, based on my personal reflections on my teaching experience, is intended to provide a start in that direction.

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A VYGOTSKIAN PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPRETER ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

It was as a student at Western Maryland College's graduate program in teaching interpreting that I was introduced to the theories of the Russian psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky. Students in the teaching interpreting and teaching ASL programs enrolled in an applied research class which was co-taught by Dr. James Lantolf of Cornell University and Betty Colonomos of the Bicultural Center. MJ Bienvenu, also of the Bicultural Center, served as a consultant to the students who were enrolled in this class. Along with other course content, we looked at the applicability of qualitative research to the study of language learning and interpreting.

The greatest challenge of this course was a year-long research project which culminated in a graduate thesis. The research project was to be qualitative in nature, and if possible, to be founded in Vygotskian theory. Because I have always been interested in pupil evaluation and assessment, it was in this area that I focused my research investigation.

Specifically, I examined the application of Vygotskian theory to the process of guiding interpreting students toward meaningful self-assessment.

The process by which I conducted my study was truly a Vygotskian experience. I traveled from a literature review to discussion with my instructors to a research question. The question led to the gathering of data, and the data led me back to my instructors. From my instructors I returned to a broadened literature review, from there to discussion with my colleagues and teachers, and after each discussion I returned to my data. Each new piece of information led me to a new level of analysis and a new question, but each question led me toward a new level of understanding. I did not emerge an expert on Vygotsky by any means, but it was this journey that brought me to a perspective on student assessment that I would like to share.

In this paper I examine the educational philosophy of Soviet psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky-and the

application of Vygotskian theory to the process of guiding American Sign Language/English interpreting students toward meaningful self-assessment. In order to lay some groundwork necessary to begin an application of Vygotskian theory to interpreter education, I conducted a pilot study to compare the different ways in which students and teachers define the task of performance assessment. In this document, I will describe four orientations that emerged when interpreting students were asked to assess their own interpretations, and I will suggest ways in which teachers can use students' perceptions to contribute to the shared context necessary for effective assessment interactions.

EVALUATION OF INTERPRETING STUDENTS' PERFORMANCES

Interpreting is a highly performance-based profession. American Sign Language-English interpreters must demonstrate skills in language competency (both ASL and English) and management of the process of interpreting. They also must demonstrate a wide range of general world knowledge as well as knowledge about American and American Deaf culture.

Management of the interpreting process requires several higher mental functions, including memory, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These critical thinking skills allow students to process

and produce information in two languages, and their interpreting performances reflect the ways in which they manage this process.

As interpreter educators, we teach interpreting skills and evaluate students' interpreting performances. There exists, hopefully, a relationship between these two educational tasks. Evaluations are often based upon a teacher-determined norm for the demonstration of particular linguistic and process management skills at a given point in time of the students' educational process. Through teacher-generated evaluations, students receive information about their own interpreting abilities, measure the effectiveness of their interpretations against an identified standard, and use this information to improve their interpreting skills.

Evaluation is an essential component of every academic program, and we as interpreter educators face the challenge of identifying standards within our field.

We also meet with students on a regular basis to discuss their learning progress and to guide students toward an analysis of their own management of the interpreting process. Traditional models for these discussions generally are patterned after what Freire would label a banking model of education (1989). Under this model I, as an effective teacher, listen to the student's questions and comments about the process and product of interpretation, compare the

information received from the student with my own previous knowledge base, and then guide the student toward an understanding of my own expectations or criteria for success. In these interactions, I evaluate the student's performance while the student listens to my evaluation, or I use this session to share information that I have previously documented on an evaluation form. In this banking model, it is assumed that the teacher holds valuable information that is not available to the student; in other words, the teacher is the subject of the learning process and the student is the object (p. 59).

I might deny participation in such a one-way method of providing feedback by pointing to the on-going discussion that happens during these sessions. In truth, the underlying pattern remains the same: teachers report on information collected from a performance-based observation while the student asks questions or offers explanation for an aspect of the performance. I may alter my expectations of an individual student, or I may alter the way in which evaluative information is delivered, but the initial pattern of the interaction remains the same for most feedback settings.

Interpreting students not only receive feedback from their teachers but also give feedback to their classmates. The manner in which students provide

feedback to each other often follows the previously-described banking method of education as well: students watch or listen to a peer interpret and then comment upon what they have seen or heard. Again, according to Freire, the student receiving the feedback functions in the role of object, while the evaluating student performs the role of subject.

As we search for more effective ways to work with our students, I believe that we must focus on the underlying philosophical beliefs that we hold about the educational process and the ways in which those beliefs are manifested in our style of teacher-student interactions. It may be more effective for us to define the feedback session not as an opportunity for the teacher or peer evaluator to share information with a willing object, but a joint meeting for the purpose of collaborative problem solving.

VYGOTSKY AND JOINT PROBLEM SOLVING

Interpreting students share more in common with their teachers regarding performance assessment than is revealed by traditional methods. Both teachers and students must de-personalize, objectify and analyze the student's performance in the hopes of gaining more information about the ways in which students approach the **task** of interpreting. Both teacher and student face the same problem: to recognize how the student's

performance, or product, reflects the student's management of the interpreting process. The ultimate goal of the feedback session is education, but within that broader goal exists a sub-goal: for the student to transfer knowledge and skills gained in the immediate feedback session to future interpreting performances.

Rogoff and Gardner (1984) suggest that generalization from one problem to another is a function of the students searching for similarities between new problems and old ones, and that students are guided in this effort by their own previous experiences with similar problems. The role of the educator is to teach students how to define and solve problems while developing skills in finding or creating similarity across contexts. According to this role, an important function of the teacher-student interaction is to provide guidance in creating links between the context of a novel problem and more familiar problem contexts, a problem-solving process which allows for the application of previous skills and information (p.97).

The Vygotskian school of Soviet psychology conceptualizes education as an activity that is social in nature. According to Vygotsky, intra-individual skills have their origin in inter-individual contact, and the overall development scheme begins with external activity and

ends with internal individual activity (Wertsch and Stone, 1985). In the words of Vygotsky, "the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events" (Vygotsky, 1978:57, as cited in Greenfield, 1984:117).

One assumption central to Vygotskian theory is the interactional nature of the changes we call development: that it is useful to characterize behavioral changes in terms of shifts in control of responsibility (Cole, 1985). This shifting control within activities is called the "zone of proximal development," and was first applied in the context of instruction and testing. Vygotsky described the "zone of proximal development" as the difference between a learner's "actual development as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1934, translated in 1987,p.86, as cited in Cole, 1985:155). Rogoff and Gardner (1984) describe the zone of proximal development as "that phase in the development of a cognitive skill where a child has only partially mastered the skill but can successfully employ it and eventually internalize it with the

assistance and supervision of an adult" (p.97).

Cole (1985) treats that concept of a zone of proximal development as the structure of joint activity in any context where there are participants who exercise different responsibilities by virtue of different expertise (p. 155). In a learning situation, the teacher exercises more responsibility in that he or she is more proficient in the type of critical thinking necessary to accomplish a given action. The teacher is able to transmit this information through conversation with the student, acting as a model for critical thinking (Smolucha and Smolucha, 1989).

Woods, Bruner, and Ross (1976, as cited in Greenfield, 1984) originated a metaphor to describe the ideal role of the teacher. Initially in the learning of any skill, the teacher carries the greatest responsibility in the activity, erecting a scaffold for the student's more limited skill. The teacher's selective intervention provides a support tool for the student which extends his or her skills and allows the student to accomplish a task not otherwise possible. As the student's learning and development progress, the scaffold gradually diminishes and the roles of learner and teacher become increasingly equal. Scaffolding closes the gap between task requirements and the skill level of the learner until the student is able to do alone what formerly could

be done only in collaboration with the teacher. In so doing, this process of collaborative work between teacher and learner often advances the learner's skills as well as accomplishing the task at hand (pp. 116-119). According to Greenfield (1984), the concept of scaffolding does not involve simplifying the task during learning. Rather, "...it holds the task constant, while simplifying the learner's role through the graduated intervention of the teacher" (p. 119).

Rogoff and Gardner (1984) use the term instruction to refer to situations in which an expert deliberately attempts to increase the knowledge and skills of a novice. Vygotsky's use of the notion of proximal development is used for the evaluation of instruction, in that instruction is good only when it proceeds development, when it "awakens and rouses to life those functions that are in the process of maturing or are in the zone of proximal development" (1956:278, as cited in Wertsch and Stone, 1985:1650.) In this way, the teacher structures and models appropriate solutions to problems, engages the learner in these solutions, monitors the learner's current level of skill, and supports or "scaffolds" the extension of current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence (Wertsch, 1979; Wood, 1980; as cited in Rogoff and Gardner, 1984:97).

Feedback and student assessment are instructional activities. From a Vygotskian perspective, the role of the teacher in a feedback session is one who actively engages the student in the assessment process. The teacher provides the gradually-diminishing scaffold that supports the student in the learning process and encourages the student toward increasingly independent thinking. Moreover, according to Greenfield, "The scaffold not only helps successfully to accomplish the current **task** but also provides information which, as it becomes better internalized, gradually eliminates the learner's need for the scaffold itself" (1984: 125).

Central to instruction using the zone of proximal development is the manner in which the teacher builds an instructional context by establishing references to what the student already knows. In this type of instruction, the participants collaborate to construct a process whereby information and skills are communicated through the shared construction of a solution to the cognitive problem rather than through the teacher's explicit directions for how to solve such a problem (Rogoff and Gardner, 1984:101). Specifically, "by actually performing the task under expert guidance, the novice participates in creating the relevant contextual knowledge for the **task** and acquires some

of the expert's understanding of the problem and its solution" (Ibid.).

Tharp and Gallimore (1988, as cited in Smolucha and Smolucha, 1989,p.3)describe the four stages of learning in the zone of proximal development in this way:

1. The first stage is the actual conversation accompanying some physical activity.
2. In the second stage the student regulates his own activity through his own private speech which is modeled after conversations with the teacher.
3. In the third stage the self-regulatory speech becomes fully internalized and requires no vocalization. This third stage would be similar to the level at which experts function when they appear to intuitively solve problems.
4. Finally, there is a stage of deautomization where external speech is again necessary because of increases in **task** complexity or perhaps fatigue. At this point, the memory of the teacher's voice may be reactivated, private speech might occur, or an interaction with a teacher sought.

VYGOTSKY AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE INTERPRETING TASK

In order to jointly accomplish a cognitive performance, the teacher and student must share or create a common framework for the coordination of information (Rogoff and Gardner, 1984).

A crucial feature of this concept is the subtle process whereby the teacher analyzes the student's readiness for greater responsibility and adjusts the scaffolding for learning to produce appropriate understanding of a particular problem. If the context for interaction is unintelligible to the student in light of his or her current knowledge and skills, the participants cannot communicate, and the teacher is unable to guide the students toward an understanding of the new information.

For teachers to create feedback sessions in which the participants are able to construct an intelligible context of interaction, teachers must listen to what students say about their own performance. According to Greenfield (1984), "fundamental to the scaffolding concept is sensitivity to the skill level of the learner and the idea that the scaffold supports what the learner can already do" (p. 131). This involves a loosening of the teacher's control to allow for the spontaneity on the part of students that is crucial to collaborative problem solving and the creation of the common framework. So critical are these students' perceptions that a lack of sensitivity to interpreting students' skill levels prevents effective scaffolding from taking place.

In addition to the need for teachers to listen to student's perspectives is a need to recognize the ways in which teacher-student dialogue creates a new

definition of situation. At the beginning of an interaction the participants usually have vastly different definitions that arise from their own private worlds. Through negotiation their private worlds come together in a shared dynamic social world, and their communication creates and transforms the situation (Wertsch, 1985, pp. 160-161, as cited in Lantolf and Frawley, 1988). Communication relationships in shared-task settings are established between participants when "they share the same situation definition and know that they share the same situation definition" (Wertsch, 1984, p. 12, as cited in Lantolf and Frawley, 1988).

Lantolf and Frawley (1988) emphasize the question of control in dialogic interactions. In asymmetrical relationships the world view of one participant is endorsed at the expense of the other, while in symmetrical relationships both world views are promoted. In the latter, the participants attempt to negotiate a temporarily shared social world, and hence, a shared situation definition.

In the field of interpreter education, no information currently is available to document students' perceptions of their own interpreting performances, nor is information available that indicates how students might approach an interactive-feedback situation. Teacher's perceptions are

similarly unrecorded, and in no place is the teacher's definition compared to those of the students.

If we as interpreter educators want to create joint learning contexts in which we promote our students' world views and encourage increasing responsibility on the part of our students, we must be aware of the kinds of observations that students make. It is important to become aware of how these performance observations compare with our own and how these perceptions come together to create a shared definition of situation. It is through a recognition of both world views that a shared world develops, and it is through this shared perspective, or shared mind, that true scaffolding becomes an effective teaching strategy.

And so, for my master's thesis, I conducted a pilot study that attempted to document students' observations about their own interpreting performances and, through these observations, to infer the ways in which students define the task of assessment. I further worked to compare students' perceptions with my own to examine the ways in which teachers might define the same situation. This study hopes to lay some initial groundwork for an exploration into the feedback session as a situation in which the student's world view is accorded equal status with that of the teacher. Information yielded from this study may

enable teachers to see the feedback session as a collaborative problem-solving effort in which a shared definition of situation encourages effective scaffolding to take place.

TESTING PROCEDURE

At the time of my study, I was working with 18 beginning interpreting students. All were enrolled in a one-year certificate interpreter education program at a four-year college. Of the original pool of 18 students, 16 were female and 2 were male, and they ranged in age from 20 to 36. All but two of the students had entered the program at the sophomore year or higher, and three of the students had previous Bachelor's degrees. From this pool, four students were chosen for the purpose of this study. They range in age from 21 to 31, all are female, and all have previous college experience.

This interpreter education program screens its applicants for ASL competency, English competency, knowledge of Deaf culture, and general world knowledge. Students are selected into the program through a competitive process. The minimum ASL requirement for application to the program is one year of ASL course work or its equivalent skill. This requirement is indeed minimum in relationship to the language proficiency necessary for effective interpretation, but it is somewhat

reflective of entry requirements into ASL-English interpreting programs at its time. All of the students had previous experience viewing themselves on videotape.

As a part of their activities in a ten-week interpreting class, students were notified of, and anticipated, completing two videotaped ASL-to-English interpretations that would be evaluated by the teacher as a part of the course grade.

One week prior to the first interpretation evaluation, students were given a written English text to prepare. They were told that they would each consecutively interpret the text on videotape and write feedback on their own performance as a part of the testing assignment. In preparing their translations of the text, students were allowed to work in groups or pairs, consult with outside resources, or work alone.

The performance material came from the Reading Milestones series, Level 4, Book 6 (King and Quigley, 1982). The story used for this performance describes a family camping trip and was selected for the familiarity of its content. While this material was chosen to provide a uniform stimulus for all participants, it does not reflect the speaking style of a live speaker, and hence weakens the study.

A graduate assistant studied the testing material and attempted to tell the

story in as natural a manner as possible. She monitored the students' output to allow for consecutive interpreting. Students were alone in a classroom with the graduate assistant during the videotaping process.

Immediately following the videotaping, students took their videotapes home to prepare a written response. The instruction was "to write anything you want to about your performance." If students asked questions about the assignment (e.g. "Can we write *anything*?" "Can I write how stupid I felt?") the response was always, "You may write anything you want."

When the students returned their videotapes and written comments they were placed in an envelope, unseen. On the same day, I watched each student's videotape and wrote my own written responses to the student's performances.

STUDENT RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Data from all four student responses were analyzed. The written comments of each student were categorized as relating either to Target Language Production or the Interpreting Process. (Some responses were dealt with as "Cannot Categorize.") Within the two broad categories of Target Language Production and Interpreting Process, several smaller sub-categories were developed.

Within the larger category of Target Language Production category were 11 sub-categories. An example of a student's response is included in each category.

Target Language Production

1. Lexical problems with remediation strategy:

"I signed NOTHING when need NOT for JOE SAY WORRY NOT."

2. Lexical problems without remediation strategy:

"Sign FISHING not correct."

3. Syntax problems with remediation strategy:

"OK dippy - who's hungry, the log or the boys? Must remember to reintroduce the old subject after a new one has been talked about."

4. Syntax problems without remediation strategy:

"When Dad said, "Let's camp there near the lake" I signed that with bad ASL word order."

5. Facial grammar:

"Non-manual facial expression inappropriate for CHEESE - I turned it into a verb."

6. Affect:

"Liked the way I saw the skunk - expression here appropriate."

7. Discourse Structure:

"Not clear about the snow & family play in - it looks like separate scenes up top the mountain & in front of me."

8. Mistakes:

Student comments were classified as mistakes rather than errors when they indicated a "slip," or if the teacher believed that the student knew the appropriate production or linguistic construction.

"Signed DEER wrong"

"Cold fish? The fish weren't COLD!"

9. Omissions:

Omissions were noted only when students commented on them. No distinction was made between omissions that the students were aware of during performance or noticed during their self critique.

"I forgot to sign that Joe laughed."

"I forgot Joe's name sign."

10. Production:

This category included comments about the way in which a grammatical construction was produced or articulated. "Dad building fire - leaves sprinkled looked **sloppy** & meshed together - not clear and distinct signs."

11. Overall evaluation:

Several students commented on their overall Target Language production.

"Overall I think I did fine."

After watching their performances many students commented on various aspects of the interpreting process.

Because of the nature of the activity, it was impossible to determine whether or not the students made the observation during their interpretation or while viewing the videotape.

Interpreting Process

1. Source Language Comprehension:

"Come and get it' means 'Food is ready' right?! That's what I thought!?"

2. Message Equivalence:

"Dad's fire building was OK"

3. Task Management:

"Gail started before I was done with 'Mom and Dad helped Chad and Joe.' Why didn't I stop her? Dumb - rattled me."

4. Tangential Issues:

This category included comments on students' appearance or mannerisms.

"Shave, you scruff monger, and get a tan."

"Need to not touch myself, play with ring, sleeves, etc."

5. Practice:

Comments in this category referred to the student's practice or to the relationship between practice and performance.

"I don't feel the results were at all commensurate with the work and effort I put into it."

6. Attitude Toward Testing Task:

"I was much more relaxed and felt more in control of the situation than I felt in the past tapings.. ."

TEACHER RESPONSE CATEGORIES

My responses were analyzed as well and created sub-categories under the larger categories of Target Language and Interpreting Performance.

Target Language Production

1) Lexical Issues

2) Syntax

3) Facial Grammar

4) Affect

5) Discourse Structure

6) Production

Interpreting Process

1) Message Equivalence

2) Task Management

3) Tangential Issues (e.g. appearance, mannerisms, etc.)

DISCUSSION: ASSESSMENT ORIENTATIONS

Data were examined to see if any pattern of responses appeared. Four clear student patterns emerged: one student focused on lexical issues, two on grammatical issues, and one on the interpreting process. I labeled these patterns orientations to assessment. These orientations may reflect the students' individual perceptions of the interpreting process and the internal processing that occurs when they are faced with an interpreting task. Further, these orientations provide a reference point for teachers who are working to establish a shared context for feedback collaboration.

Student Orientation #1: Lexical Orientation

The first student's responses indicate a strong lexical orientation. This student recorded several instances in which an individual sign was incorrect or misarticulated. Despite the number of lexically-based comments, the student makes no distinction between errors in sign choice or production and the simple mistakes that occur in all communication. This seems to indicate that while she recognized lexical miscues, she may not have internalized the differentiation between those miscues that need remediation and those that merely need correction.

- * Did not pluralize 'boy' when talking about Dad addressing to two boys
- * Signed 'cow' when intended 'deer'
- * Signed that the boys sat when actually they stood
- * Signed 'surprised' intended to sign 'idea'
- * Signed 'demand' when attempting to depict hooking a fish on a hood.
- * Spelled 'pan' with two "n's"!
- * 'Dinner' used English sign
- * Signed 'food, tent enter' meant 'in'

Student Orientation #2: Syntax problems Without Remediation

The second student's responses suggest an orientation to ungrammatical structures. This student recognizes incorrect utterances, and asks questions about their accuracy, but is unable to offer suggestions for remediation of her mistakes. The fact that she recognizes ungrammatical structures is valuable information; the fact that she does not offer remediation strategies independently provides base line information for teacher scaffolding to take place.

- * Mom topicalized already-so I need to establish this again??
- * Again a bad interpreter error-repeating myself - "again walked on path again" (temporal aspect? subject-verb agreement?)

- * Why did I repeat "surprised"? (I forgot where I was and what I said?)
- * Why repeat "sit on" (log) when I didn't establish it (log) to begin with?
- * If backpack already off-why show taking off again?
- * "DON'T WANT SCARE FISH" - since when do fish have feelings?? maybe better -"fish take-off"?? I don't know!!
- * Awkward hiking (in) mtns!!
- * Map-awkward- what do you with it when you have it in your hands?
- * VALLEYS HAVE SNOW, NONE. VALLEYS COLD, NONE--makes no sense!!
- * "GO BEAUTIFUL PLACE, CAMP THERE? boy where did this come from??
- * MOM COOK FISH FIRE - boy what a broken sentence that has no meaning!!
- * WATER INSIDE PAIL - looks awkward!!
- * DAD HAVE IDEA GOOD - what does that mean?
- * I don't think that's right! "food in the tree"
- * How do you light a match and start a fire?

Student Orientation #3: Syntax Problems With Remediation

The third student suggests an orientation of independent remediation. She not only recognizes ungrammatical constructions, but she offers suggestions for remediation strategies as well. This

student's perception of the evaluation task differs markedly from her peers in this regard, and her responses lead to a better understanding of the shared context that can be created between this student and her teacher.

- * At the start of the story I should identify the boys but also sign NAME SIGN
- * When Mom cooks dinner-need to show pot on fire
- * Wash plates- PLATE FAMILY WASH DRY
- * Chad not a beginning-should be WATER CHAD SPILL
- * Bears walk in woods-error- TREES LOOK FOR FOOD need to topicalize BEAR again
- * GO INTO not need at the end
- * "Camp here tonight" I should sign TONIGHT WE (family) CAMP HERE rather than HERE CAMP TONIGHT

Student Orientation #4: Interpreting Process

The last student's responses suggest an orientation that is very different than that of the other three students. This student seems to be responding from a process orientation; her comments focus on how she felt, what she thought, and how she looked. This instructional base line is much different than that of a product-oriented student. In order to construct a scaffold

that supports a student's current knowledge, the teacher of this student must deal first with the interpreting process before any discussion of the product can take place.

- * Gail started before I was done with "Mom and Dad helped C & J" why didn't I stop her?? Dumb- rattled me.
- * Conscious of working to keep my concentration
- * High awareness of sentence structure (verb final, subject & verb together, etc.).
- * I notice myself looking up to visualize before I'd start to sign
- * Notice my structure's different from what I do for stories for Debbie's class.

DISCUSSION: SHARED CONTEXT

My responses to each individual student reveals some interesting information about the way in which a shared problem-solving context can be built. In each instance, I recorded at least one observation which was similar to the student's; these shared observations suggest a basis for a shared definition of situation. In this way, the teacher can use the shared task (world) view to move into the student's zone of proximal development. Then the teacher can experiment with extending the student's skills and knowledge to include other sources of information.

However, of interest is the fact that the majority of students' comments related to specific grammatical constructions while no specific constructions or examples appeared in my comments. In other words, the students used specific examples to exemplify larger TL production issues, while the teacher focused on the larger TL production issues that could, one would imagine, be exemplified by any number of student examples.

This distinction in definition of situation provides valuable information to the instructor who chooses to create an instructional context based upon students' perceptions. In essence, the students in this study defined the task of performance evaluation from a "bottom-up" definition: they focus on readily-observable surface structures and define the task based upon their ability to evaluate these specific structures or sub-tasks. The teacher viewed performance evaluation from a "top-down" perspective: the primary focus is on the larger task of interpretation, and the surface structures are dealt with only as they provide information about the student's overall competencies in relation to the larger task.

Knowledge of the student's perspective allows the teacher to discover the foundation for a learning scaffold. Through students' comments about their own performances, teachers gain

valuable insight into the students' internal processes. Knowing this, the teacher can tap into the student's current knowledge and skills and help them to move from immediate product to overall process, and from an immediate solution to generalizations across similar contexts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERPRETER EDUCATION

The students in this pilot study approached the evaluation task by examining individual grammatical constructions. Their responses indicate that they evaluated specific Target Language production utterances without consistent connection to the task of interpreting as a whole. In contrast, the teacher's responses indicate a primary focus on the larger task of interpretation, with attention paid to individual structures only as they provided information about the students' overall capabilities.

This information is immediately relevant to the structure of the feedback session. Teachers who follow their own "top-down" or process-related perspective may be forcing a world view upon their students which is incomprehensible. The students in this study demonstrated a need to manage the evaluation process from a "bottom-up" or product-related perspective; teachers who are working toward a shared construction of solutions will want to recognize, value

and incorporate this perspective into effective scaffolding techniques.

This difference in definition of situation is vital to an understanding of the teacher-student feedback interaction. Feedback must be based upon the student's perceptions rather than upon teacher-determined criteria. It is upon the student's perception that effective scaffolding will take place, and any feedback session that is initiated from the teacher's definition of situation may be ultimately unintelligible to the very student for whom the benefits of this interaction are designed.

Teachers must ask their students what they see in their performances, and then use that information to extend the student's knowledge. The teacher can use a student's observation about a single grammatical construction to extend the student's command of that construction; the teacher may be less effective when presenting a larger grammatical principle and asking the student to search for relevant examples.

Again, teachers must be aware of the orientation that students bring to the feedback session. Should a student focus primarily on lexical items, the teacher can use this orientation to construct a shared learning context. It may be less effective for the teacher to encourage grammatically-based remediation strategies from this student; this task may fall outside of the student's current zone

of proximal development and effective learning cannot take place. The same holds true for the student who is preoccupied with process. A feedback session which recognizes the student's world view will begin with a process-centered discussion; following a teacher's syntax-focused agenda will not allow learning to take place.

The students' responses, and the orientations that they represent, provide the teacher with access to their internal processing. Teachers who are committed to effective scaffolding must pay close attention to the kinds of information that their students share in this regard. If the context for interaction is to be intelligible to the student in light of current knowledge and skills, it is upon this very information that the successful scaffold is built.

Utilization of a Vygotskian-based teaching philosophy is not outside the realm of most teachers' expertise. As shown in this study, there were areas of shared context between the students' and the teacher's responses to the students' performances. In each case, the teacher's responses in some way mirrored or matched that of the students'. What is necessary is for teachers to become aware of the vital importance that these shared perspectives play in effective learning.

APPLICATION

Since the time of this study, I have worked actively to listen to what students say about their own interpretations and to recognize that the students' perspectives provide me with access to their internal processing. In so doing, I have worked to give the students' world views equal status with my own so that both world views are balanced. I listen to what students say about their own interpretations in order to analyze their readiness for advanced skills or increased knowledge. I listen carefully as students create the relevant context that is necessary for me to make the content of the learning interaction intelligible in light of their current knowledge and skills. From this experience, I have reexamined and reinforced some of my own beliefs about the teaching and learning experience. DeRuiter (1991) makes several assumptions about the teaching/learning process that illustrate this educational philosophy; I have extended them to address the task of interpretation assessment.

* Learning proceeds from wholes to parts to wholes. Students do not first learn all of the parts in sequential fashion and then apply them to a broader context. Conversely, they do not need to understand the whole in order to relate meaningfully to some of its

parts. Rather, the parts are learned within the context of the whole, and students integrate these parts into the whole as they become ready to work on broadened ideas and problems. Teachers vary their instructional approach to allow for this; they still have clear goals for learning, but they allow for alternative routes to reach those goals.

* Students' understanding of teaching and learning vary. They will have different knowledge bases and learning rates, but it is the way in which they address learning tasks that provides the teacher with meaningful information. Every student can work effectively on self assessment if the student is committed to self-analysis. Instructional dialogue that is centered on what an individual student already knows is meaningful to the student and provides a far less critical language for teacher-student interactions.

* Teaching is an interactive process and learning is a social activity. The individual student learns through interactions with the teacher and with other students. Every student has important knowledge to contribute to the group, and students benefit from understanding differences as well as similarities among learners. Even more, students learn about

assessment by listening to each other; students model and then internalize the speech of other students as meaningfully as they do that of their teachers.

* Students will enter and leave our programs with different levels of understanding. We offer the same curriculum to all students, but they will develop their own skills and understanding related to their own goals and abilities.

* Students must be allowed to define their own problems, discover their own solutions, and work to apply those solutions to similar situations. A teacher-defined problem may not be perceived as a problem by the student. Similarly, a teacher-generated solution may not solve a student's problem nor be perceived by the student as applicable across contexts. Rather, teachers work to construct a process whereby information and skills are communicated through the shared construction of a solution to the problem (Rogoff and Gardner, 1984:101).

* Students will not understand the course or program content completely, nor will they think about the interpreting process in the same way as their instructors. If we are to teach students to think independently as interpreters,

students must be allowed to own their own learning as interpreting students. In other words, it is not important that *I* demonstrate my own understanding of an interpreting student's skills and process, but that the *student* shows understanding of her/his own skills and process.

* Teachers will always know more than their students. In order to guide students toward increased responsibility in self assessment, teachers must practice shifting the focus from their own world views to those of the students. Teachers must practice formulating questions that encourage students to share their perspectives, and they must be comfortable asking follow-up questions that further engage students in self analysis.

EXAMPLES

The following hypothetical dialogues are offered to clarify the application of these principles to a teacher-student feedback interaction that focuses on an individual student's interpretation. Although they have been recreated for the purpose of this paper they are based upon actual teacher-student interactions.

#1: Student-identified problem. teacher-identified solution

The first dialogue describes a traditional feedback interaction between a teacher and a student. The student interpreted a monologue from **ASL** to English in which the signer described a long-distance bicycle trip. Notice that the teacher supplies the student with information that is based upon the teacher's knowledge and experience. The student identifies a problem, but the teacher guides the student toward the teacher's expectations by providing the solution.

Student: "Did I have enough affect to match the speaker?"

Teacher: "Well, generally, yes, but I think you could have incorporated a bit more vocal affect to match the affect of the signer. The beginning was a nice match, when the speaker was fairly matter-of-fact, but you could have used more affect during the part when he talked about looking for his bicycle in the storage."

Student: "Right, I thought that, too. I knew I didn't have much affect, so I did try to get louder during the part when he was looking for his bike."

Teacher: "Yes, and that was good. Volume is one way to demonstrate affect. But you saw how animated he got during that section; his signs got faster and larger, and he was using some fairly

strong facial expression. I think you could also have used more vocal inflection, and maybe some pauses or emphasis during that section."

Student: "I was aware of that, but I just didn't have time to put it in."

#2: Student-identified problem. shared solution

The next dialogue represents a more student-directed session. The teacher and student are discussing the same ASL-to-English interpretation of the bicycle story. In this interaction, the teacher avoids giving the student explicit descriptions of a solution. Rather, the teacher asks questions that encourage the student to analyze the processes involved in the interpretation, and that teacher actively listens to the student's responses. Based upon the student's perspective, the teacher offers appropriate "scaffolding" that allows information about the problem to be communicated while the student participates in the shared construction of a solution.

Student: "Did I have enough affect to match the speaker?"

Teacher: "Could you hear the affect in your voice during the interpretation? Were you monitoring for affect?"

Student: "Yeah. I didn't do much in the beginning, but when he was talking about looking for the bike, I got louder. But I

don't know if that was appropriate or not."

Teacher: "What was the signer doing that led you to get louder?"

Student: "Well, his signs got bigger."

Teacher: "Yes. That's one indication. Did the signer do anything else that would call for more vocal affect in the interpretation?"

Student: "He was signing faster. And he had a really disgusted look on his face."

Teacher: "Is there anything else that you can do besides raise your volume to match the speaker's affect?"

Student: "Yes. I wanted to use more pauses, but I didn't have time."

Teacher: "Were you aware of the fact that you wanted to put in some pauses but that you didn't have time?"

Student: "For a fleeting second, yes. But I was having too much trouble just getting the words out to pay attention to it."

Teacher: "Are there any other ways that hearing people show vocal affect that you could have used to match the speaker?"

Student: "I could have emphasized particular words that would match his feeling about looking for the bike."

Teacher: "Sure. Volume, pause and emphasis are all ways to show vocal affect. Now that you have time, can you recreate that section with the vocal inflection that you'd like to have?"

#3: Teacher-identified problem. teacher-identified solution

In this example, the teacher defines the problem by specifically describing an error in interpretation. The error occurred during an English-to-ASL interpretation about a car accident. While it appears as though the teacher is engaging the student in problem solving, it is the teacher who ultimately prescribes all solutions.

Teacher: "I was confused with your use of directional verbs in the part where the speaker talked about hiring lawyers."

Student: "Yeah, I know. I didn't know how to handle the insurance companies in the first place, so when I got to the part about the lawyers, I was all over the place."

Teacher: "Since there were three insurance companies involved, you could have placed them left, center, and right. Then you'd know in which direction you wanted to sign HIRE. Does that make sense?"

Student: "I thought of that. But I tried to list them, and I only had two on my list."

Teacher: "Well, because the third company was implied in English, you could have added that to your list in ASL. Then you could refer back to your list when you talked about hiring lawyers. You could point to each indicator on your list, then sign HIRE in three different directions. Would adding

the third company to your list help with signing HIRE directionally?

#4: Teacher-identified problem, shared solution

In this dialogue, the teacher still defines the problem, but then listens to the student to discover ways in which they might jointly develop a solution. During the interaction, the teacher models ways of articulating the problem, encourages the student toward increasingly more independent thinking, and deliberately attempts to increase the knowledge of the student. In fact, while the teacher defines the presenting problem, she then works with the student to discover an underlying problem. In so doing, the student accomplishes the task at hand while acquiring some of the teacher's understanding of the problem and its solution.

Teacher: "I was confused with your use of directional verbs in the part where the speaker talked about hiring lawyers."

Student: "Yeah, I know. I didn't know how to handle the insurance companies in the first place, so when I got to the part about the lawyers, I was all over the place."

Teacher: "Why were you having problems interpreting the section that introduced the insurance companies?"

Student: "Well, the speaker said that there were three insurance companies, but she only named two."

Teacher: "Why were you hesitant to include that information in your interpretation?"

Student: "Because the speaker didn't say it, she just implied it."

Teacher: "What do you know about the ways in which the Source Language and the Target Language handle implication?"

Student: "They're different. In this case, the speaker implied what the third insurance company was, and I knew that right away. In ASL, the implication isn't there visually. If I want to refer to all three, I need to name all three first."

Teacher: "Right. If you had included that in your earlier interpretation, would the use of directional verbs in the next section been easier to manage?"

Student: "Sure, I could have signed them clearly. I usually don't have a problem with directional verbs easily."

Teacher: "So the problem isn't directional verbs."

Student: "No. It's trusting my sense of getting implied meaning from the speaker and including it in my interpretation."

#5: Teacher-identified problem. teacher-feedback as goal of the interaction

From time to time, teachers may want to offer direct feedback to students. Direct feedback can play an important

role in students' development by helping students to focus on specific aspects of the interpreting process and of students' interpretations.

Teacher-generated feedback must be direct and clearly identified. Teachers must not attempt to disguise feedback within the self-assessment process nor use the self-assessment process to guide students toward their own feedback. Attempts to guide students toward a teacher-specific answer can frustrate both the student and the teacher. This approach may cause students to react defensively, and it weakens the trust relationship that is inherent in student-directed learning.

In this example, the teacher refers to a specific problem that appeared in the English-to-ASL interpretation about a car accident. But the dialogue ends with the teacher offering a suggestion in the form of direct feedback that did not emerge from the teacher-student interaction. Throughout the interaction it appears as though the teacher has a hidden agenda: to lead the student toward the "right" (teacher-identified) answer. Engaging the student in a problem-solving process that can only end with a specific answer betrays the goal of shared problem-solving.

Teacher: "I noticed that the section describing the actual accident wasn't

clear. Is there anything you could have done to make that section clearer?

Student: "Well, I was confused about interpreting the positions of the two cars. I didn't know which one to include first."

Teacher: "Right. I saw you hesitate in that section. But it was appropriate to indicate the position of the speaker's car first, then to indicate the position of the car that hit her. So that section came out accurately. What else could you have done to make that section clearer?"

Student: "I stumbled on the fingerspelling of the make of the speaker's car. She said that is was her dream car, so I wanted to fingerspell the make clearly."

Teacher: "I didn't have any problem with the fingerspelling. Is there anything else that you could do to make this section clear?"

Student: "Well, since the fingerspelling was clear, and the positions of the cars was clear, I guess I don't know what else I could do."

Teacher: "Let's look at this section again. Do you see anything else that you could do?"

Student: "Not really. I don't know what you're looking for."

Teacher: "Look at your sign formation. It's not very clear here. It's really important to produce clear signs, and to do that, you need to concentrate on the accuracy of your hand positions."

Student: "**Yeah.** I guess I was concentrating on other problems. This was a hard section for me to interpret."

Teacher: "Exactly. Since this was a difficult section, it appears as though you forgot to form the individual signs clearly because you were concentrating on other issues."

#6: Teacher-identified problem (direct feedback), shared solution

In this example covering the same section in the interpretation, the teacher clearly describes a problem that she sees with the student's sign formation. Rather than attempting to guide the student toward the teacher's definition of the solution, the teacher begins the dialogue with the problem statement, then actively works with the student to identify the problem's origin.

Teacher: "I noticed that in the section describing the actual accident your sign formation isn't clear. That concerns me because you usually have very clear hand positions and accurate sign formation. Do you know what was happening here that caused the lack of clarity?"

Student: "Well, I was confused about interpreting the positions of the two cars. I didn't know which one to include first."

Teacher: "Right. I saw you hesitate in that section. Was it difficult for you to decide which car's position to include first?"

Student: "Yes. In my visualization I saw both cars, but I mentally started to interpret the section describing the car that hit the speaker's car. Then I realized that was silly, so I switched to interpreting the position of the speaker's car first. I was using up so much of my concentration on the two cars that I didn't even think about how clear my signs were."

Teacher: "You usually have no problem with forming individual signs clearly, so I was wondering why that problem occurred here. Was there anything else happening in this section?"

Student: "Yes. The speaker threw in the fact that her car was her dream car. I was working so hard on fingerspelling the make of the car clearly that I didn't concentrate on sign production. There was so much to handle in this section. It seems as though the more complicated a passage gets, the more I have to concentrate on the interpretation."

Teacher: "Exactly. That's true for all of us. And when we are working at or above capacity, sometimes one of more aspects of the interpretation suffers."

Student: "I think that's what happened. I felt out of control of the interpreting process, so I think that's why my sign formation suffered. I felt out of control interpreting the section where she talked about future litigation, too. Can we look at that section and see if I my sign production wasn't clear there, either?"

Teacher: "Sure. That might help us understand what's happening for you in the process."

In a traditional dialogue, the teacher uses the product of an interpretation (what is seen or heard) to discuss how to produce a future product of interpretation. But in a student-centered interactional dialogue, the teacher uses the product of **an** interpretation to guide the student toward an understanding of the cognitive processes that led to the final product. The discussion may be performance-specific, but it is structured to allow for the discovery of generalizations. The teacher's goals are to transmit expertise through conversation with the student, erect appropriate scaffolds through selective intervention, and guide the student toward a shift in responsibility so that the roles of the student and the teacher become increasingly equal.

CONCLUSION

The Vygotskian school of psychology assumes that development is interactional in nature, and characterizes learning in terms of shifts in responsibility; in the learning of any new skill the teacher first carries the greatest responsibility and erects a scaffold for the student's more limited skill. The teacher's selective intervention provides a support for the student which extends the

student's skills to a higher level of competence. The teacher transmits information through conversation with the students, models critical thinking, and gradually removes the scaffolding to allow the student to accomplish the task independently of the teacher. The scaffold is built within the student's zone of proximal development and serves to build an instructional context through reference to what the student already knows. Central to the concept of performing a task under a teacher's guidance is the student's participation in creating the relevant contextual framework.

Interpreter educators hope that feedback sessions provide students with information that will improve the students' management of the interpreting process. In order to do this, the teacher must accomplish a subtle process whereby the students' readiness for new information and greater responsibility is carefully tested; a process which is based upon the students' participation in the creation of a shared context.

Feedback sessions which are based upon a banking method of instruction ignore the world view of the student in favor of that of the instructor. In so doing, the opportunity to negotiate a temporarily-shared world view is lost. For interpreting teachers to build successful scaffolding upon which student learning can take place, they must listen

to their students. They must loosen their own control to allow for the articulation of their students' perceptions, and they must compare these students' perceptions with their own.

Further research is needed to look at the ways in which actual conversation between students and their teachers reflect individual perceptions of the interpreting task. More research is needed to discover how students' comments are modeled after conversations with their teachers. Of further interest would be the factors which contribute to students' assessments of their own performances (e.g. length of language study, familiarity with the interpreting content, performance comfort level, etc.)

By way of laying some groundwork toward the application of Vygotskian theory to interpreter education, this paper presented a study of students' and their teacher's definition of an assessment task. The results of this study showed three ways in which the teacher's and students' assessments of the students' interpretations can lead to effective teacher scaffolding: identifying students' and teachers' perceptions of the task, defining students' orientation to the assessment activity, and the teacher's role in the creation of a shared context.

This study suggests changes in the current approach to providing interpretation feedback to interpreting

students. It may be most effective for teachers to define the feedback setting as a joint meeting for the purpose of collaborative problem solving. In order to create a shared context for effective dialogue, teachers must listen to their students and base their feedback interactions on students' perceptions. These students' perceptions are critical to the process of constructing a learning framework in which a shared dynamic social world can be negotiated and effective scaffolding can take place.

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INTERPRETER'S CASEBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Each day on the job, interpreters face a wide range of situations that test their communication skills, their professional ethics, their decision-making abilities, and their physical and emotional stamina. Interpreters can best learn to anticipate these kinds of challenges by having opportunities to think them through in the safety of a classroom or study group before they arise.

We propose to develop a case study book of incidents in interpreting for instructional and self-study purposes. We hope to engage you - as an interpreter, instructor, consumer, employer, or supervisor - in contributing incidents from your own experience so that the book reflects the breadth of the field. We want to collect and recount those experiences that are significant to you, in which you learned something, and from which others, too, can learn. We will disguise identities and places, edit and organize the cases, find the common threads, elucidate themes and frame the cases with commentary, study questions, and a cross-referencing

scheme.

The *CaseBook* will illustrate the myriad and complex challenges that interpreters face in the field every day including questions of ethics and interpreter role, culture and mediation, communication and business practices, protocol and etiquette, group and interpersonal dynamics, problem-solving and decision-making. These topics are clearly of concern to students approaching or in their practicum experiences, recent graduates of interpreter preparation programs, working interpreters, and practicum supervisors.

In a broader sense, we hope that our experiences will reveal something about the nature of our emerging profession. How have we evolved as professionals? How has our behavior changed in relation to our clientele? How have we viewed the Code of Ethics and how do we negotiate the guidelines that have been set forth for us? How has our role changed in light of political and social strides in the Deaf community? Framed from this broader perspective,

the *CaseBook* will not only help us reflect on our evolution and our future directions, but it may also be of interest to theorists and practitioners in the behavioral and social sciences.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The idea of learning and teaching about interpreting through case studies does not originate with us. All interpreter educators have told stories to students -- or asked them to act them out -- to illustrate ethical dilemmas, cultural quandaries, logistical puzzles. We've all known intuitively that this approach works well. Jan Kanda's study of interpreters' preferred learning styles confirmed our intuition, demonstrating that interpreters have a distinct preference for learning by examples. [1] Sherman Wilcox invited contributions of squibs for the Journal of Interpretation in his recent note to the *RID Views*. [2] How often have we all wished that someone would put together a volume of interpreters' stories that would take us beyond our own experiences and those of our local communities? [3]

Our collaboration on this project began in 1991 when we discovered that each of us had been thinking about putting together such a case study book. After a few exploratory conversations, we decided to try creating some cases from our experiences. Without clear instructions though, we wrote up sample

cases in very different ways, one of us providing more detail and interpretation of the events that had transpired, the other telling a partial story, leaving outcome and interpretation to the reader. Our first task was to develop a means of gathering cases in some consistent format.

We developed an elicitation form which we sent to 39 deaf and hearing interpreters and consumers, sixteen men and twenty-three women. Among the sample were adult offspring of deaf signing parents, others with early exposure to ASL, and the rest who acquired signing skills later. Twenty-five are currently interpreting; nine are "alumni/ae" or "veterans", that is, they used to interpret and now have another primary career focus; and twenty-one out of thirty-nine are interpreter educators. Four of the sample were not interpreters, but familiar with interpreting from their experiences as consumers of this service or as spouses of interpreters. We selected a distribution of people across the United States and included two individuals overseas. This distribution attempted to give some regional flavor to the sample without pretending to be statistically representative of any particular known population. More importantly for our purposes, the sample consisted of individuals who would be reflective about the interpreting experience and sufficiently comfortable

with us to critique the elicitation form.

We sent out the form early in July 1992 for return by the end of the month. By August 19, six people had responded sending us eleven cases total. For a direct mailing activity, a 16% response rate is a reasonable response rate.

However, in hopes of getting even more feedback, we sent reminder postcards to everyone who had not yet responded. This brought us seven more responses -- one-third of our sample -- increasing the contribution of cases to twenty-four. We were pleased with the response rate, and even more by seeing that the people who did respond often had more than one incident to share. We selected an incident from those contributed and, based on our review of case study books in other fields, developed three case treatments for presentation at the 1992 CIT Convention. The case and the revised elicitation form appear as Appendices.

Our goal in presenting the *CaseBook* to the Convention was two-fold. We hoped to learn from participants how they might use the book, what competencies they hoped to teach with it, what form it should take to be most useful. We hoped, too, to engage participants in collaborating with us by contributing their cases to the book. The remainder of this article recounts the activities of the session, including responses of the participants.

GROUP EXERCISE #1 - A SAMPLE CASE

We asked conference participants to consider teaching applications and learning objectives for three treatments of a sample case, which we've titled "Letting You Off Easy." The treatments appear here as Appendix A. In Treatment 1 a scenario is introduced but no resolution is specified. The reader is challenged to create a variety of possible responses and outcomes. In Treatment 2, the incident and its outcome are described in full, essentially as the interpreter saw it. To this we have added a list of cross-reference categories to stimulate discussion and further exploration. Treatment 3, like Treatment 2, presents the case in full, and includes, as well, a list of Study Questions.

Assembled in small groups of 6-8 people, participants addressed the following questions:

1. How might you make use of each of the three treatments of this case? Consider the level of the students, particular course, focus of your program. Will it best apply as classroom discussion material? a written homework assignment? exam material?

2. What do you expect your students would gain from exposure to this case? What competencies will these tasks build?

We anticipated answers would assume that the primary target audience for the book would be students in an internship or practicum experience, who had completed skill-building exercises and would have theoretical familiarity with making decisions in interpreting situations. Participants returned from their small group discussions with many intriguing and often unanticipated responses:

* Treatment 1 would be useful as a starting point for a role play exercise. Students could take the roles of the three participants and work out a resolution to the conflict.

* Case studies would be of value not only to advanced students, but perhaps even more so to beginning students who have no preconceived notions about interpreting. These students could focus on broader concepts of ethical behavior, problem-solving, and decision-making.

* Treatment 3 was seen as potentially valuable to beginning students who may not yet be aware of the kinds of questions interpreters need to consider in analyzing situations.

* The *CaseBook* could facilitate a Vygotskian approach, promoting student interaction and minimizing instructor involvement and direction. [4]

* This material has potential application as computer-based exercises in which the system would pose a

dilemma and interact with a student user toward resolution.

* As exam material, cases could be used to assess development of analytic and problem-solving skills.

* Cases could be used as panel discussion material, in which Deaf panelists could share their perspectives.

* Cases could be very valuable as consumer education material, for both Deaf and hearing users of interpreting services.

* Case studies could be useful in bringing out principles in interpreting, e.g. preconference meetings; awareness of speaker goal; prediction skills; decision-making skills; historical views of interpreter behavior. Students should be empowered to create alternative solutions, rather than adopt a recipe for handling situations. [5]

* A suggestion was made to apply the treatments to achieve different results. A case presented as in Treatment 1 combined with Study Question #1 could be used to stimulate discussion of options and possible outcomes; a case structured as in Treatment 2 combined with Study Questions #2-6 allows analysis of the actual results; and a case presented as in Treatment 3 might be used to test students' abilities to predict, analyze, and make decisions.

GROUP EXERCISE #2 - CASE DEVELOPMENT

Every one of us has participated in an interpreting incident -- as interpreter, consumer, mentor, or observer --that, if shared, would provide a valuable lesson to budding interpreters or fuel a lively discussion among seasoned practitioners. In the second group exercise, we asked participants to interact with a partner:

1. *Share a case ~~from~~ your own interpreting experience with your partner (5 minutes each).*

2. *Discuss what students can or should learn from these two cases you've just shared (5 minutes).*

Our goal in the session -- as in this article -- was to remind participants that they have stories of value to contribute to the *CaseBook*. With little or no coaxing, the pairs took advantage of the opportunity to recount an unresolved issue or delightful success. Participants found that their partners drew even more from their stories than they had expected.

Participants in the session returned from their dyad discussions with comments about what they hoped students would gain from working with the *CaseBook*:

* Through experiences with case

studies, students can learn to anticipate and negotiate breakdowns in the interpreting process.

* As students work through cases, they will learn to acknowledge and cope with feelings that arise in stressful and emotional situations.

* Students can also learn how to talk discreetly and constructively about their own experiences.

* A collection of cases can bring students in contact with a variety of situations far beyond the experiences of an instructor.

Several participants mentioned concerns about confidentiality, echoing comments from the summer sample. We are committed to keeping the identities of contributors and others in the reported incidents confidential. We believe we can present cases in such a way that they can be useful as teaching and learning materials, and yet maintain participants' anonymity. For example, in the sample case in Appendix A, the authors of this article know which interpreter sent in the case, but can you tell? And, despite the fact that we were both acquainted with the interpreter at the time of the case, neither of us can guess who the other two participants are.

Idoreover, we believe that the more cases that come in from all regions of the country the easier it will be to maintain the confidentiality of the cases, for several reasons. First, we will see

some overlap or duplication of general problems presented by cases, so we can make composite cases, drawing details from several similar examples. Second, we expect that some dilemmas arise from demographics, so the more cases, say, from rural areas, the more likely we'll be able to disguise the cases. In a parallel concern, Deaf interpreters have expressed their fears that cases in which they were involved will be even more obvious to their clients and communities, and our response again is write up more cases! The more examples from Deaf practitioners, the easier it will be to disguise them.

CONCLUSION

We appreciate having had the opportunity to present this idea, a proposal to collect our professional community's experience for the benefit of all our students, to the CIT convention. It gave us the impetus to move from the personal -- two of us talking to each other -- to the public -- getting feedback from a larger group of colleagues, the primary audience of instructors who will use such materials. We felt that the convention session was successful in many respects: we communicated our idea for a new kind of teaching material for interpreter education; we were pleased by the lively discussion and enthusiastic reception among the conference participants. The

real measure of success, however, will be the active participation of that audience and our readers in the *CaseBook* project. As you read these proceedings, we invite you to write up an interpreting incident that affected you.

An incident might be complex or very simple. For instance, have you ever been late for an assignment? What happened? Have you ever walked away from an interpreting situation feeling that you handled that situation particularly well? Have you ever left a job upset about the interaction or the outcome? How about a time when you felt embarrassed? What happened? What about a time when you were in over your head and needed back up? Or what about a time when you felt really supported on the job? How about a time when you might have felt in physical danger, for example from exposure to x-rays, or from working too long without a break? What about a time when you felt like an intruder, or when you felt accepted on the job? What about a time when you were scared about whether you were doing the right thing? Or a time when you wished that someone had warned you about the situation that you were walking into? Or perhaps there was a situation where you felt you knew too much? What about a time when there was a miscommunication and you didn't repair it?

As an observer or consumer, have

you ever had to intervene because an interpreted interaction went awry? What situations went smoothly and why? Is there something that happened years ago that you would handle differently now? Is there a situation that maybe you're still puzzling over, one that you are still angry about, one that you still laugh about?

Use the form given here as Appendix B to guide you, or just write it in your own words. Try this activity in a local RID meeting or ask students to complete it as an exercise for a class. Then, send the cases to us for inclusion in the *Interpreter's CaseBook*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the friends and colleagues who participated in the process of helping us test the elicitation form. Their comments have aided us in the revision of the form, making our request more clear and our cross-referencing categories more comprehensive. Their encouragement and amazing assortment of cases have strengthened our belief that the *Interpreter's CaseBook* will be a helpful teaching and learning tool. We, however, are responsible for any omissions or errors that remain in the form.

NOTES & REFERENCES

[1] Kanda, J.H. 1991. "Demographic profile and brain dominance preferences among certified sign language interpreters: Implications for educators." In L. Swabey, (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 1990 CIT Convention*.

[2] Wilcox, S. 1992. "What's a squib?" *RID Views*, May, p.28. Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.

[3] We note that Sharon Neumann Solow and Steven Fritsch-Rudser had intended to create a workbook in ethics cases, which preceded our effort by several years. Although that effort is no longer among their active projects, it would have differed from the proposed *CaseBook* in an important respect: they planned to invent the cases, rather than rely on actual incidents. More recently, Joan Wattman and Eric Deemer have examined interpreters' decisions and decision-making as exemplified in reported cases as part of their graduate work for the Interpreter Educator degree.

[4] Vygotsky's theories of learning have been rediscovered by a number of disciplines after many years, among them interpreter education. Gish's presentation in this volume shows the application of his theory to interpreter evaluation.

[5] Betty Colonornos, in her presentation at CIT 1992, discussed more on the pitfalls of the "cookbook" approach.

Appendix A:

Sample Case: "Letting You Off Easy"

Treatment 1: Finish the Case

By 1978, I'd been signing for about eight years, and certified by RID for two. A deaf friend who was a landlord had a dispute with a rental agency over one of his tenants, and some money for damages was in question. My friend had had previous contact with the rental agency, had reviewed their written proposal on how the situation could be handled, and wanted to negotiate the resolution of the dispute.

We worked very well together on the phone, came to an agreement that was a compromise position, and we were ready to conclude the call. My friend, known for his sense of humor, tried for a light moment at the end of this somewhat disagreeable conversation, and signed: "Ha, I think I'm letting you off easy."

I translated this as accurately as I could, wincing as I did so.

The rental agent's reply was immediate and unequivocal: "In that case, if you feel like that, the deal's off!!"

Discuss possible interpreter responses and the likely outcomes of each.

Treatment 2: Full Case with Cross-referencing

By 1978, I'd been signing for about eight years, and certified by RID for two. A deaf friend who was a landlord had a dispute with a rental agency over one of his tenants, and some money for damages was in question. My friend had had previous contact with the rental agency, had reviewed their written proposal on how the situation could be handled, and wanted to negotiate the resolution of the dispute.

We worked very well together on the phone, came to an agreement that was a compromise position, and we were ready to conclude the call. My friend, known for his sense of humor, tried for a light moment at the end of this somewhat disagreeable conversation, and signed: "Ha, I think I'm letting you off easy."

I translated this as accurately as I could, wincing as I did so.

The rental agent's reply was immediate and unequivocal: "In that case, if you feel like that, the deal's off!!"

At this point, I broke role and tried to rescue the situation from my friend's ill-timed humor. I explained to the man on the phone that it was MY fault, that I hadn't conveyed the right tone of voice or I had misunderstood something (anything to save the deal for my friend). It worked. But I had broken role,

and was acting as his friend, not his interpreter. And I was angry at my friend for pulling such a dumb stunt.

In retrospect, I could have stayed in my role, and just let my friend stew in his own juices. But my instincts as a friend rose above my professional instincts as an interpreter.

But maybe it was my fault that my friend attempted his little joke at the end, trying to have the last word. Maybe I hadn't sufficiently conveyed the tone of the rental agent's voice, indicating how reluctant he was to make a compromise. If I had been sharper, perhaps he would have avoided trying to inject his inappropriate humor. Perhaps I could have begun the conversation with a few words about the risks of inaccurate or incomplete translation, cautioning him about reacting too quickly. Who knows?

[Cross-reference categories: business negotiations; ethics and role; group and interpersonal dynamics; culture conflict (Deaf/Hearing, other); translation and language; telephone interpreting]

Treatment 3. Full Case, Cross-referencing, Study Questions

By 1978, I'd been signing for about eight years, and certified by RID for two. A deaf friend who was a landlord had a dispute

with a rental agency over one of his tenants, and some money for damages was in question. My friend had had previous contact with the rental agency, had reviewed their written proposal on how the situation could be handled, and wanted to negotiate the resolution of the dispute.

We worked very well together on the phone, came to an agreement that was a compromise position, and we were ready to conclude the call. My friend, known for his sense of humor, tried for a light moment at the end of this somewhat disagreeable conversation, and signed: "Ha, I think I'm letting you off easy."

I translated this as accurately as I could, wincing as I did so.

The rental agent's reply was immediate and unequivocal: "In that case, if you feel like that, the deal's off!!"

At this point, I broke role and tried to rescue the situation from my friend's ill-timed humor. I explained to the man on the phone that it was MY fault, that I hadn't conveyed the right tone of voice or I had misunderstood something (anything to save the deal for my friend). It worked. But I had broken role, and was acting as his friend, not his interpreter. And I was angry at my friend for pulling such a dumb stunt.

In retrospect, I could have stayed in my role, and just let my friend stew in his

own juices. But my instincts as a friend rose above my professional instincts as an interpreter.

But maybe it was my fault that my friend attempted his little joke at the end, trying to have the last word. Maybe I hadn't sufficiently conveyed the tone of the rental agent's voice, indicating how reluctant he was to make a compromise. If I had been sharper, perhaps he would have avoided trying to inject his inappropriate humor. Perhaps I could have begun the conversation with a few words about the **risks** of inaccurate or incomplete translation, cautioning him about reacting too quickly. Who knows?

[Cross-reference categories: business negotiations; ethics and role; group and interpersonal dynamics; culture conflict (Deaf/Hearing, other); translation and language; telephone interpreting]

Study Questions

1. How might the following factors have contributed to the problem:

- * interpreter/consumer relationship?
- * the telephone medium?
- * cultural expectations (Deaf/hearing)?
- * business norms?
- * preparation?

What other factors might be considered?

2. Faced with the rental agent's response ("...the deal's off!!"), what are the interpreter's options?

3. Was the friend's sarcasm out of line? How would you make a determination?

4. How much of this misunderstanding can be pinned on adequate or inadequate conveyance of "tone of voice" (and its signed counterpart)?

5. How can critical aspects of personal style and affect be accurately perceived and conveyed in interpreting, and here, more specifically, over the telephone?

6. If we reset this situation, not in 1978, but today, how might the outcome be different? Compare and contrast various models of interpreter behavior (e.g. helper model, machine model, bilingual/bicultural model) vis-a-vis this interaction.

Appendix B

INTERPRETER'S CASEBOOK

We need your help!

We are putting together a book of case studies for interpreter education. We are collecting stories of consumers, interpreters, interpreter educators and their students that illustrate the myriad questions and dilemmas which arise in interpreted interactions.

We invite you to describe an interpreting incident:

- **where you learned something significant**
- **when you wish you had acted differently**
- **that you still puzzle over, or ...**
- **in which things worked just right!**

We will accept as many examples as you have energy to describe. (Please, firsthand accounts only; no experiences of "friends of friends".)

- **Working Interpreters:** Give us a "dump" of your diary. Pick choice day or two - "Day from Heaven" or "Day from Hell".
- **Mentors and Protégés:** Let us see the same situation in two views.
- **Instructors:** Make this an assignment in the internship or practicum course.
- **Veterans and Alumni/ae:** We want the major and minor war stories.
- **Consumers:** Which situation stands out in your mind?

You needn't worry about writing style. Be business-like or chatty or whatever suits you and the story you're telling. Just include sufficient detail to make the story come alive. We will rework examples to fit the style and space limitations of the final book.

We are also asking for a bit of information about you to be able to organize and index the incidents you offer. We will, of course, keep the identities of interpreters and their clients confidential by changing or creating names and circumstances.

While we prefer written examples (in English), we will accept contributions on 1/2" VHS cassettes. We take responsibility for transcription and translation from ASL and related varieties of signing. (We'll consider other languages and media - give a call first please.)

All contributors will be acknowledged in print, unless you request anonymity.

LEGIBILITY COUNTS! Please print or type

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____
Street City State ZIP

Phone No. () v/tty Phone No.() v/tty
DAYTIME EVENINGS

Sex: Male— Female— Hearing Status: Hearing ___ Deaf ___ Hard of Hearing ___

Year of BIRTH 19 ___ Years SIGNING ___

Years INTERPRETING ___ CERTIFICATION ___
TYPE DATE

What CATEGORY best classifies the incident? (Circle one or more)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Employment & Training | Education (Pre-school, K-12) |
| Business, Negotiation | Education (Post-Secondary) |
| Court, Legal, Administrative Proceedings | Medical & Mental Health |
| Conference | Rites & Rituals |
| Telephone | Arts & Theater |
| Translation & Language | Business Practices |
| Logistics (Time/Place) | Protocol & Etiquette |
| Ethics & Role | Group & Interpersonal Dynamics |
| Interpreter's Mental & Physical | Communication Interaction and |
| Health or Safety | "Traffic Control" |
| Teamwork | Vision or Mobility Issues |
| Culture Conflict (Deaf/Hearing, other) | Consumer Education |
| Other: | |

May we mention your name in the list of contributors? YES ___ NO ___

What other background information do we need to know about you or the incident? (E.g., do you have deaf parents or other close relatives? what is your first or primary language? other language combinations? other specialized or professional training?)

When you send in a completed form, you grant Cogen & Frishberg a non-exclusive right to use or distribute your comments in any way they believe appropriate without incurring any obligation to you.

Please use a separate form for each incident - Attach additional pages as needed

Include:

1. Who? Your role (hired interpreter? volunteer? practicum student? consumer?) and other participants
2. When? How much experience did you have at the time?
3. Where? Describe the setting (in words or diagram)
4. What happened?
5. How? How else could the situation have been handled?
6. Why? What did you make of it? What should we learn from this incident?

This form is a self-mailer: Please secure any additional pages inside, fold and tape closed.
Attach first class postage and drop in the post box. Thank you!

Send completed forms to:

Interpreter's CaseBook
Cathy Cogen
1 Childs Road
Lexington MA 02173-4501

GETTING OUT OF LINE (AND INTO SPACE):

A PERSPECTIVE ON STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT INTERPRETERS

MARINA L. MCINTIRE

NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAFNESS, CSUN

AND

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Everyone who has ever worked with less experienced interpreters or with interpreting students (indeed with sign language students) has been asked the following question: "What's the sign for X?" or "How do you sign Y?" I have long since stopped answering such questions, and am tired of explaining why. A question that interests me much more both as an interpreter and as a linguist is this: is there anything in particular that makes working between spoken and signed languages more "difficult", more interesting, or in any way critically different from spoken language to spoken language? The difference in modality is one obvious answer, but that's a very easy answer and doesn't really take us anywhere. What

does that difference in modality mean for us?

In some ways, the modality difference should make it easier, rather than more difficult. For example, we do not have the interference of two auditory messages coming in simultaneously, as does the spoken language interpreter. One implication that strikes me as potentially interesting is the fact that information presented in spoken English is ordered linearly. That is, it is packaged in strings of sounds and words and sentences, each following the one before. Our task is to re-organize it three-dimensionally in Sign.

Of course, as we all know, signs also follow one upon the other and so do signed sentences. **All** the same, it is clear that signed languages are able to organize

things three-dimensionally, that is in space, in ways that are very different from spoken English. [You will notice that I am focusing on the **task** of moving from English to Sign. This in no way obviates or discounts the **task** in the other direction. I just had to start somewhere.] This change in dimensionality is a real challenge for us, whether we are working in ASL/interpretation or "English"-like signing/transliteration.

What are the strategies that successful interpreters use to shift an essentially linear message (source language: spoken English) to an essentially three-dimensional message (target language: signs)? Moreover, are there any intrinsic relationships between English language structures and rhetorical devices and our ability or our inclination to "spatialize" information? If there are, what are they? Are they semantically based? Are they syntactically based? Are there characteristics of an English-language text that make it "easier" to encode in sign? At what point or points in an English-language text does the successful interpreter know it's going to "sign well," that her job is going to be "fun" because it will come across clearly?

I would like to concentrate on these issues in relationship to teaching transliteration. Let me start by clarifying some of my background and experience. Since these are likely to color

significantly my view and interpretation of the data, I have tried to identify at least some of those factors. I am inclined to use the term CASE here in reference to the target product of successful transliteration. CASE stands for Conceptually Accurate Signed English. I am unhappy with the term because I am not always sure what exactly it means and because it leaves a great deal of margin for error. It's a bad term as well because it suggests that only signs deal in concepts, i.e., that English is a "non-conceptual" language.

On the other side, however, it does us the service of narrowing our universe of discourse: we are not talking about SEE or any other form of "signed English" that tries to be exact. Rather, I am talking about a philosophy and a target form that holds considerable respect for the language of Signs and that pushes practitioners at least to try to use signs with some dignity and not to force them to mean something they don't.

My twenty or so years of experience as a transliterator in post-secondary classrooms, interpreting for brand-new signers and non-ASL signers, influences my observations and intuitions from both the angle of the consumer and the practitioner. First, in my experience, young deaf signers respond better to and seem to understand the message better when they are given good transliteration,

i.e., transliteration that uses space in the same principled ways that **ASL** does.

These consumers know some English; they are, however, rarely native speakers of English, and they have been exposed either only or primarily to second-language, hearing users of some form of Sign, usually not **ASL**. Moreover, and tragically, these second-language models have rarely been trained or evaluated for skillful communication and language skills. In other words, entering deaf college students have only rarely seen competent Deaf users of Sign. (Sadly enough, they have even rarely seen competent hearing users of Sign. That, however, is also an issue for another discussion, and not something we can resolve here.)

It is critical that the interpreter not view herself as a language instructor; yet she is faced with a terrible dilemma. She can choose to sign badly -- with either absolute or relative lack of concern for the meanings of signs or the nature of signed language (i.e., space). The justification is that consumers will understand "the signs". Her other choice is to sign competently -- with as much attention, concern and respect as she can muster for the task and for the language -- so that the consumers understand the message. As I say, my experience with such consumers appears to support the latter choice. I do not make this claim lightly nor do I suggest that we make

these choices politically or without regard to the primary goal: the consumer getting the message.

From the interpreter's side, I point out that transliterators in post-secondary (and other) classrooms are those most at risk for injury to their hands and arms. The thoughtful use of space allows us to save physical effort, instead exerting our brains to structure the message in a way that requires less physical strain -- at the same time producing a clearer message. My experience with mentees suggests that when they begin to use their brains, by tapping consciously into, e.g., the Colonomos approach to transliteration, they feel more successful. What is of equal or more importance, they produce more coherent, more successful transliterated messages and their hands don't hurt so much.

So much for the practitioners' view. Now let us think about educating those practitioners. In some interpreter education programs, students first study **ASL**, and then they learn and practice interpretation -- working between English and **ASL**. In other programs, students begin by working between English and some form of **CASE**, i.e., they learn first (or perhaps only) to transliterate. The issue of the long-term effects and value of either approach I leave for another discussion. What is significant for us here is that, regardless of whether

students learn first to interpret or whether they are taught from the beginning to transliterate, three things are usually true:

1) They have **weak** target language skills. ASL is typically a second language, learned by adults in classroom settings; programs are too short, and curricula rarely require much serious work on a sophisticated level of language skills in ASL or of linguistics of ASL; often no language skills are required for entry into interpreting coursework, so that students are having to "acquire" their second language literally at the same time they are learning to interpret in it;

2) Students have weak source language skills. Several things factor into this situation: open door admissions in many two-year schools, meaning no opportunity to weed out unpromising candidates; weak teaching and learning in English in pre-college settings; in other words, they arrive in our programs with weak English skills. Our curricula and our curriculum writers have been noticeably loath to make suggestions as to how to improve students' skills in their first language, so graduates leave with similarly weak English skills. Students rarely are advised prior to entry about the nature of interpreting as a profession, so they don't think about interpreting as dealing with language. For example, they mostly think they are going to "work with the deaf". Any number of interpreting students and working

interpreters tell me quite off-handedly that they never liked English in school nor did they ever do well in English in school. Yet they are expected to earn their living as a professional user of the language! and

3) Without making any claim about students' abilities in interpretation, they all too often have a problem making their transliteration comprehensible. For one thing, it's usually "too" English, i.e., they use literal translations and for another it has no spatial structuring. That is, I claim that the transliterated message is not incomprehensible because it is English or CASE or anything else, but because it is bad signing: it is poorly structured, and it has little or no use of space. A few examples may help:

1) Teacher: 'We watch these storms very closely'

Interpreter: WE LOOK-AT S-T-O-R-M VERY NEAR

A better possibility: WE LOOK-AT circle point S-T-O-R-M CAREFUL

2) Teacher: 'Such programs have dwindled under the last three presidents, but especially the most recent, Mr. Bush'

Interpreter: THAT PROGRAM REDUCE UNDER PAST THREE PRESIDENT BUT SPECIAL MOST AGO, B-U-S-H

A better possibility: THESE-OF-FIVE
PROGRAM GROW-SMALL UP-TILL-
NOW THREE PRESIDENT THREE,pt-
at WORSE THIRD-OF-THREE
RECENT B-U-S-H.

I make no argument here about any of these suggestions being -- like the old Sears catalogue -- "good, better, best" transliterations of the texts in question. I simply point out that literal and non-spatialized transliteration is neither "better" nor "best" and is probably not even "good". Any of a dozen options could be made, still remaining within the realm of CASE, and still maintaining consistent and clear mouthing for consumers who rely on it.

Let us start from two assumptions. First, that transliteration is a form of interpretation, as Colonomos has defined it (in her teleclass, Spring 1992): that the interpreter understands the speaker's meaning, produces an equivalent message, and it is accountable for her decisions. Therefore transliteration is subject to processing and re-structuring as is interpretation between English and ASL. Second, that any "English-like" transmission of information is enhanced and improved by the careful, thoughtful use of space. That is, my take on transliteration is this: whatever else transliterators may do, we

are producing a particular and potentially identifiable form of ASL, a visual-spatial language.

When working with student interpreters, instructors often run up against difficulties in getting learners to transfer what they know about ASL and what they know about interpretation to the task of transliteration. That is, students often assume that "English-like" signing means a "no-brainer": they don't have to figure out what is meant, and even if they do, they don't have to (perhaps should not) re-structure that message so that it reads more clearly. All evidence to the contrary, younger interpreters continue to view transliteration as the "easy" kind of interpreting. (That this is so is supported by candidates' strong preference to start RID testing with CT.) More often than not, students and less-experienced interpreters invest little thought into the process and so the product doesn't make much sense -- even for the English-preferring consumer. The idea seems to be that if it's "English", then it can be, or even has to be, sent precisely as it was received, with no effort expended on structuring it spatially or making it visually comprehensible. I have worked with many mentees who assume that they should not change anything in a transliterated message between whatever they received auditorally and whatever it is they're producing.

Procedures.

About eighteen months ago, at the request of the supervisor of communication services at NCOD, thirteen hourly and staff interpreters video recorded the same English text, which itself was a videotape of a classroom session. The English source text was a class meeting of a class on Women and Religion, which took place late in the semester: both the class and the instructor are accustomed to much give and take and much discussion during the lecture. This source text itself therefore presents certain problems: student comments are difficult to hear and the teacher sometimes mutters while writing on the board; there is much shared information within the situation, and occasional references are made that are opaque to the interpreters; the interpreters did not have any opportunity to familiarize themselves with the text. The problems are the same for all the interpreters, however, and since it is a completely natural piece of English text, I was delighted to have it accessible for my use.

The VT's made for NCOD were supposed to be for a "Model Interpreter" series, the tapes to be made generally available for interpreters to use for study and discussion. Of the thirteen interpreters, eleven agreed to allow me to use the data on the tapes. Of the eleven

so agreeing, in my judgment, seven produced "successful" transliterated target texts. I have focused my attention on these seven interpreters' texts. I looked at two places in the text: one about one minute into the text and one about halfway through. Each segment is 4 to 5 minutes long. I selected them a bit arbitrarily, but both represent a fairly self-contained "mini-text." That is, they each can be seen as micro-level texts that can stand on their own. (The Appendix has the texts that I studied.)

In looking at these texts, I have concentrated on the mechanisms or strategies interpreters have available to them to make the signed message spatial. What are some of these?

eve gaze -- any shift away from neutral or eye contact

directional verbs -- any verb which incorporates subject-object relations in its movement

pronouns and points -- includes pronouns and possessives

"placed" signs -- any sign made out of normal sign space, but not directional verbs

body shift -- any shift away from neutral, including head and shoulder movements

classifiers -- verbs of motion and location

base hand 'counters' --using the base hand to enumerate or separate sequences or instances of a larger category

Decisions to use some of these strategies may be somewhat conscious, for example, body shifts. Some are semi-conscious, as for example, "placed" signs. Some are unavoidable, such as directional verbs. Others are, I suspect, completely out of the conscious control of the interpreter, such as eye gaze. Eye gaze shifts come as a result of competence in the target language, which uses eye gaze in a very rule-governed fashion. Eye gaze is, however, extremely difficult to control consciously. In any case, these are the strategies I have examined in the videotapes. Where, then, do these strategies show up? That is, what English structures will cause interpreters to use **ASL** spatial structures?

- * introduction of nominals, especially humans
- * 'retention' or re-mention of nominals
- * compare and contrast structures
- * listing
- * plurals
- * time sequences
- * character shifts
- * prepositional phrases and locatives
- * coincidental use of a directional verb equivalent
- * anecdotes, especially those that involve

- the spatial interaction of animate figures
- * description of physical layout of setting
- * intonation often tells us what the focus is and leads to decisions regarding the use of any of these strategies

What about the relationship between SL rhetorical devices and TL spatializing, for example, listing in SL (English) and base hand 'counters' in TL (Signs). What exactly are the cues that impel an interpreter to decide on this particular strategy? A cue may be overt, as when a speaker says: "There are three factors involved in this process. Then first... ." Or it may be more subtle, as in the first text in the Appendix, when the speaker says: "And who have we seen saying things like this?" If the interpreter maintains enough thinking time between SL input and **TL** output, she will hear that both students and teacher understand this question to be demanding a list of several. Thus, we see the critical relationship between thinking time (also *decalage*, processing time, or lag time) and the availability of a variety of translation strategies.

I would claim that the use of spatializing strategies is perhaps the critical signal that the interpreter has taken the time to understand the message. Moreover, I would like to suggest that it is exactly these strategies which offer evidence that such understanding must be

in a visual format in the mind of the interpreter.

A curious aspect to this whole process is that successful interpreters can, indeed must understand and transmit an absolutely non-visual message in visual terms. So, for example, it is one thing to be able to make a decision about using a classifier form for the phrase, "He lined the women up along the walls." Here, the decision seems self-evident - at least to several interpreters in this data base - to use classifier forms, spatializing the TL in much the same way that the SL contained a spatially involved message. It is quite another for an interpreter to be able to make spatial the following: "He had gotten the message from society that women are the seat or the heart of men's problems." And yet, several interpreters did just that: they used directionally-oriented pronouns, both points and

possessives, to "set up" this character in opposition to the women in question. Thus, it may be, and I make this suggestion tentatively, that at least one thing which separates a successful transliteration from the others is this ability to "visualize" non-spatial information. To impose, if you will, spatial structure on information which, both in SL form and content, is utterly non-spatial.

In the table below, we see that distribution of a variety of strategies used by three of the seven successful interpreters. The text is partially "chunked" and seven possible TL strategies are laid out below each chunk. The numbers represent tokens of each type: how many times did three interpreters use each strategy in that chunk? Moreover, the numbers allow us to see the pervasive nature of these spatializing techniques.

Two years ago // in Montreal // a man walked into an engineering classroom						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
2	3	0	0	5	0	1
at the University of Montreal // with a sub-machine gun -- or a semi-automatic gun.						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
1	1	0	3	9	0	0
I don't quite understand weapons. Hurrah for the Brady bill. [laughter]						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
3	0	0	1	1	0	0
Jus! a little political statement here. Ummm, walked into a classroom. {?and in it--}						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
2	3	0	2	3	0	1
In the School of Engineering at the University of Montreal with a semi-act-automatic weapon.						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
3	0	0	0	4	0	1
He chased all the men out of the room. He lined the women up along the walls						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
2	5	0	1	7	5	3
and, screaming at them, "You are all feminists," he turned his weapon on them.						
PRNS	DIRV's	BASE	BODYSHF	GZ SHF	CLFR	PLACED SIGNS
7	4	0	3	9	0	3

By the time he was done, eight or ten of them were dead, twenty were wounded,
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
3 0 1 0 11 0 0

and then he turned the gun on himself.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
2 4 1 1 3 0 0

Now I'm not suggesting this was a Sane and rational individual.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
5 0 0 3 9 0 0

What I am suggesting is that in a very twisted kind of way, there was a logic to what he did.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
11 1 0 0 8 0 0

He had gotten the message from society that women are the seat or the heart of men's problems.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
9 4 0 3 10 0 3

And so if men have problems, you solve them by turning your anger against women.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
1 3 0 5 7 1 4

This man's problem was that he had been denied admittance to the School of Engineering.
PEWS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
10 5 0 1 8 0 4

His illogical conclusion was that, had the University never admitted women
PEWS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
4 1 0 1 10 0 1

into the School of Engineering. there would have been a place for him.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
6 2 0 1 2 0 6

But since they allowed women students — these feminists — admittance into the University,
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
3 4 0 5 9 0 4

there was no longer a place for th--for him. Therefore, how do you solve it?
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
4 1 0 2 4 0 1

You kill the women and then there'll be a place for you in, in campus.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
4 0 0 0 1 0 0

Umm, it doesn't make sense perhaps. But it does in a kind of twisted way.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
1 0 0 1 9 0 0

Attitudes like that, we may say, are aberrations. They are deviant. These aren't normal people;
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
9 2 0 2 7 0 3

these aren't people anybody would look up to.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
7 3 0 3 5 0 0

But these are attitudes that are rampant in our society. And they are rampant because
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
6 0 0 0 4 0 0

we — as we have looked this whole semester — have a two thousand-year history (or better)
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
7 0 0 0 9 0 0

of descriptions of women which are not // umm. flattering, to say the least,
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
4 0 0 2 6 0 0

which describe women as problematic, as evil, as wicked, as dangerous.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
3 1 7 0 12 0 0 -

And even in the modern era, these attitudes continue.
PRNS DIRV's BASE BODYSHF GZ SHF CLFR PLACED SIGNS
4 0 0 1 6 0 0

I pointed out above that English is essentially linear in nature and that one challenge for the transliterator is to make that linear information into a three-dimensional encoded message. Let us note, however, that it is one thing to be able to "set up" one's signing space when one is working with anecdotes and the spatial, locational activities of human beings or animate beings in a story. It is quite another to be able to visualize the spatial relationship in non-spatial information, in abstract information, and in content which has no intrinsic spatial analogue. Here, it seems to me, lies the crux of being successful in transliteration: the ability to take both form and content which is non-spatial in nature and spatialize them both. The one -spatializing form - is the first step. Learning to use points, to "set up" signing space, to use and take advantage of directional verbs, these are all skills that come with knowing the TL well, at least reasonably well.

More difficult, I believe, is the ability to use one's thinking time to visualize non-spatial content into a spatial format. The challenge remains for us to teach young interpreters and would-be interpreters the knack of "seeing" information, messages and meanings in a way that leads to it being encoded spatially. One might observe or even object that this is no different from interpreting into **ASL**. In one way, that is

absolutely true, and I repeat an observation that has been made repeatedly, but most saliently for me in a TIP class from Western Maryland College: Once we pick up our hands to sign, we are doing **ASL**. English is a spoken (or a written) language; the very fact of signing means that we are producing some form of ASL. This automatically implies that spatialization will be part and parcel of our product. At the same time, our target product in transliteration is structurally and grammatically similar to English. This works against spatialization and constitutes the special challenge of transliteration: producing English-like structures with ASL characteristics. Once students understand that transliteration is not easy, they will begin to appreciate how much it is the opposite. And finally? perhaps they will be able to distinguish between good transliteration and bad interpretation.

APPENDIX

First Text

Two years ago, in Montreal, a man walked into an engineering classroom at the University of Montreal with a sub-machine gun - or a semi-automatic gun. I don't quite understand weapons. Hurrah for the Brady bill. (laughter) Just a little political statement here.

Ummm, walked into a classroom. (?and in it --) In the School of Engineering at the University of Montreal with a semi-act-automatic weapon. He chased all the men out of the room. He lined the women up along the walls and, screaming at them, "You are all feminists," he turned his weapon on them. By the time he was done, eight or ten of them were dead, twenty were wounded, and then he turned the gun on himself.

Now I'm not suggesting this was a sane and rational individual. What I am suggesting is that in a very twisted kind of way, there was logic to what he did. He had gotten the message from society that women are the seat and or the heart of men's problems. And so if men have problems, you solve them by turning your anger against women.

This man's problem was that he had been denied admittance to the School of Engineering. His illogical conclusion was that, had the University never

admitted women into the School of Engineering, there would have been a place for him. But since they allowed women students - these feminists - admittance into the University, there was no longer a place for the - for him. Therefore, how do you solve it? You kill the women and then there'll be a place for you in, in campus. Umm it doesn't make sense perhaps. But it does in a kind of twisted way.

Attitudes like that, we may say, are aberrations. They are deviant. These aren't normal people; these aren't people anybody would look up to. But these are attitudes that are rampant in our society. And they are rampant because we - as we have looked this whole semester - have a two thousand-year history (or better) of descriptions of women which are not, umm, flattering, to say the least, which describe women as problematic, as evil, as wicked, as dangerous. And even in the modern era, these attitudes continue.

Second Text

Finally, and this is perhaps the most telling of all the statements, Phyllis Schlafly, President of Eagle Forum, said, "Feminism is doomed to failure, because it is based on an attempt to repeal and re-structure human nature." Now what does that statement say? "Feminism is doomed to failure because it's based on an attempt to repeal and re-structure human nature."

(Student: indistinct)

That - Okay. If we go back to the notion -Remember the, the quote I gave you right at the beginning of the semester. By Adrienne Rich. " What is feminism? Feminism is simply - um, the awareness that the world described by men is not the whole world." Remember we used that quote way, way back when.

So, if that's what feminism at a sort of fundamental level is about, that the world described by men is not the whole world, then what is Phyllis Schlafly saying here? That in fact the world described by men is the whole world. And that any attempt to overturn that notion is doomed to failure because that is reality. That masculinity as normative -(writes on the board) Masculinity as normative is reality. Yeah.

(Student: How so you spell that?)

Oh! You're right. I left an R out. Sorry. Normative. I can't talk either. Masculinity is normative.

Yeah.

(Student: What is normative?)

Okay. When we sa- use the word normative, when we talk about norms, or normal, it all comes from the same word. That to be a man is what it means to be human. It is the norm. What does it mean to be human being? is to be a male. He is the norm. He is the symbol of humanity, The, the model of humanity.

Anything else, then, is of course abnormal.

And who have we seen saying things like this? Where have we seen this notion that to be female -(student: Aristotle, Aquinas) Aristotle, Aquinas/ We've seen this -this is part/hm? Augustine. What? Not just Christians. Non-Christians, too. Yeah. (student: indistinct..and he wasn't a Christian.) (student : indistinct)

Aristotle wasn't a Christian. This is as much a part of, of, um, Western tradition and other traditions, um, as almost anything else.

Yeah.

(student: I think, too, what she's saying is that we don't have the power, the independence, or the knowledge to even try to change anything because people who have knowledge are like Hildegard, people who have studied and so what they're saying is we don't have that power, independence or knowledge, nor will we ever have that to ever change.)

Yeah. If Phyllis Schlafly is right, then Hildegard was an aberration. She was an anomaly. She was the oddity in human existence. But she certainly isn't a representative female. She's the odd woman, the occasional woman, who might perhaps rise above her own gender. But she certainly can't be a model for other women.

Now - the truth of the matter is that misogyny -that famous word that

every exam at least one of you doesn't remember what it means - misogyny, the hatred of women, is not dead. It may be sometimes more subtle. But when I read statements like this, I realize it's not as subtle as we think it is. People still make blatantly sexist comments and nobody thinks twice about it.

You know the guy running for governor of the state of Texas a couple of years ago? Who said hurricanes are like rape: if it's unavoidable, you might as well lie back and enjoy it. Ummm. Yeah - that's a kind of problematic statement and he makes it as a public figure.

REFERENCES

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ASSESSING AND ENHANCING VISUALIZATION SKILLS
OF INTERPRETING STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This article will address some ideas, techniques and discoveries that I have made over the last three years regarding a subject in which I have great interest -- visualization and its relationship to the teaching of ASL and interpreting. Let me first define visualization as I use the term: the ability to create and manipulate mental images. You will note that this is a two-part definition. It is important to address both skills when working with students, since both skills are integral to interpreting. Visual processing during simultaneous interpretation allows for retention and retrieval of the message through mental imagery; however, the nature of simultaneous interpretation requires that this

imagery be continually modified as additional information is received and processed.

My interest in visualization was sparked initially by two factors. First, I recognized that I have always tended to function strongest in a visual mode. The second factor was the realization that both students of ASL and students of interpretation have difficulty in developing their own abilities to visualize and/or applying visual skills to language learning and interpreting.

One recurring problem often voiced by students is the difficulty in learning to express ideas in ASL without first processing the message in English.⁵ It was demonstrated through use of exercises in which student-pairs described pictures to

each other in sign that those students who were most successful in this type of task more closely approximated ASL structure than the other, less successful students. For a more detailed discussion of this activity and other problems students experience related to visual abilities, refer to Stauffer's (1992) article on Enhancing Visual Skills for Interpreting Between ASL and English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature in the field of ASL/English interpretation and other fields such as blindness and mental creativity was conducted to determine how students' visual skills could be assessed and strengthened. It is clear that visualization is addressed by current interpreting process models. The Colonomos model (1992) incorporated visualization as a strategy for retention of meaning while working between a source and target message. Seleskovitch (1978) posited that "a mental image which the interpreter visualizes allows him to evoke the same image in the target language without remembering the words which describe it" (p.55). Robinson (1987) discussed the

relationship between visual memory and time lag. Some of the exercises I use were first mentioned in Robinson's (1987) article and I am grateful to her for her work. I refer you to these distinguished authors and presenters for a more thorough discussion on visualization as a part of the interpreting process.

A review of the literature in the fields of blindness indicated that visualization is used as a tool for orientation and mobility with persons who have lost their vision. Additional literature on creativity, imagery, and visual thinking (McKim, 1972; Richardson, 1969; Samuels & Samuels, 1975) led me to identify ten types of visual imagery: after imagery, eidetic imagery, memory, imagination, dreams, hallucinations/visions/prophecy, hypnagogic/hypnopompic imagery, day-dreams, fantasy, symbolic imagery, and spurred my desire to pull together information from these varied sources and disciplines for the benefit of students who learn to interpret between an auditory and a visual language.

Although visualization is addressed in the professional literature, little information was available on formal assessment,

teaching or enhanced visualization skills. Additionally, no curricular information was found on skills development or practical application to signing and interpreting.

ASSESSMENT

Some informal tools exist for assessing modality strengths. One example is the Swassing-Barbe Checklist of Observable Modality Strength Characteristics (Barbe, Swassing & Milone, 1984). This checklist describes a variety of areas such as learning style, memory, problem solving strategies, communication, etc. across three modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. With this checklist, students can match their own behavioral characteristics against the characteristics described in the checklist to determine their strongest sensory mode. Other assessment tools that are particularly good may be available, however, they have yet to be identified and shared with the field.

Lacking strong assessment tools focusing on visualization abilities, I wanted to develop a simple, functional tool that would provide students with some insights into their own abilities to visualize.

From the ten identified types of visual imagery and from my own experiences and that of others, I developed a self-assessment checklist (Stauffer, 1990). The checklist consists of 20 yes/no questions related to everyday situations and actions that tap into the ten types of visual imagery. My belief is that the more "YES" answers a person indicates, the more s/he tends to use visual imagery in everyday life. For some people, the checklist affirms something they already know about themselves. Others discover that they may be other-sense oriented for everyday tasks. A very few discover that they rarely function visually and, for the first time, may begin to uncover answers for the difficulties they have experienced in their interpreting attempts.

OBSERVATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My experiences during the last three years in conducting workshops on visualization reveal that interpreters tend to be highly visual people. That in itself is not particularly surprising. However, it is interesting to note that large participant groups of language students tend to be split more evenly

with approximately 50% self-assessed as being visual and approximately half as not being visual. Groups of skilled interpreters, however, tend to be highly skewed to the visual. These observations raise questions such as: At what point on the language student-to-skilled interpreter continuum does the bell shaped curve begin to skew to the highly visual? Can or should visual abilities be used to predict student success in language or interpreting programs? Can visual abilities be used as a screening tool for acceptance into interpreting programs? Can students who are not highly visual be taught to develop visual skills for interpreting, thereby possibly retaining them in the field of interpreting? These are a few of the research questions that I would like to see pursued.

STRATEGIES FOR VISUAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

Following development of the assessment checklist, my goal was to gather exercises and activities that could be used to develop and/or enhance ASL students' and interpreting students' visual abilities. The following activities for students of ASL can be utilized by educators

in either the classroom or in a workshop setting.

A. Visual Clarity and Control Exercises

McKim (1972) provides two excellent exercises to assist students in their ability to create and then manipulate visual images. In the first exercise, Clarity of Mental Imagery, students are asked to respond to a stimulus (written or spoken) such as: a "rose bud," a "body of water at sunset," a "newspaper headline," etc. and then to create a mental image. Students then rate themselves on their ability to create each image as follows: "C" if the image was clear; "V" if the image was vague but recognizable; "n" if no image was created. Discussion following this exercise usually reveals that while each student receives the same stimulus material, each approaches the task somewhat differently (some through eidetic imagery, some through memory or imagination). Each described image is thus somewhat unique, though all images have similar qualities.

The second exercise is, Control of Mental Imagery, asks students to again, respond to a given stimulus such as: a "rosebud very

slowly blooming," a "stone dropped into a quiet pond," or a "chair coming alive and carrying someone into another room." Students rate themselves on their ability to manipulate these images according to: "C" if the image was well controlled; "U" if the participant was unsure; "N" if the image was not able to be controlled. This exercise in manipulating mental information allows students to exercise their own ability in mental dexterity.

These two activities, together, tap some of the various types of imagery and exercise the two aspects inherent in the definition of visualization, that is, the ability to create and manipulate mental images (see Appendix A).

B. From Mime to Sign

Eastman (1989), in his book and accompanying videotapes From Mime to Sign, offers many valuable exercises and suggestions for developing students' abilities to use mental imagery. His progressive exercises aid in development of skill in using gestures, mime and facial expressions, and moving from line through two- and three- dimensions for describing shapes and objects. His work is invaluable in helping students

move toward the use of classifiers, descriptions, and to explore the art of storytelling. His book invites students to "think more visually, in pictures instead of words" (p. 2). I refer you to his work for a more complete description of visual activities.

C. Visual to Visual Exercises

1. The use of carefully selected action pictures are beneficial in helping students work from one visual form (picture) to another visual form (ASL) without the need to process information through English. Divide students into pairs. Assign each student a picture which is kept hidden from the partner. Each student studies his/her picture and in turn describes the picture in ASL to his/her partner. Once the partner feels s/he has a good mental depiction of the picture, the picture is then shared and the mental depiction compared to the actual picture.

2. Another companion activity was described by Colonomos (1992) in her teleclass, Processes in Interpreting and Transliterating. Students watch a signed text and then draw or represent the content or message on paper. This gives students practice in working from one visual

form to another visual form (ASL to paper). This exercise can also be repeated with students listening to an English text and then drawing or representing the message on paper. This allows students to work from a spoken form to a visual form (English to paper). In each case, students practice capturing a message visually while using only one language form.

D. Videotape Analysis for Visual Linguistic and Grammatical Components

Analyze selected videotaped texts for particular visual grammatical and linguistic components such as question markers, classifiers, characterization, use of space and directionality, etc. This will aid students in their ability to incorporate these visual components into their own sign language production.

E. Visual Strengthening Activities

1. Describing People.

Students stand back-to-back and describe each other in as much detail as possible. Pair students before giving them the instructions to prevent careful visual study of their partner before the exercise begins. Explore with the students how well they visually attend to details in their

environments (such as classmates) as they go about their daily activities.

2. Memory Pictures.

Students draw a picture from memory. A good place to begin is to create a blueprint of the house in which they grew up or a grandparent's house (if they no longer have regular access to that house). Usually students are able to recall even more detail the longer they work on this activity. Describe the differences in perception versus reality, i.e., the fact that information can be skewed when filtered through memory.

3. Finger Directions.

Students name various locations on campus, in the city, etc. and describe how to get from one location to another using only finger directions. Make sure the students include the appropriate non-manual behaviors for near, moderate and far distances. This and similar activities can be found in the Vista Signing Naturally (Lentz & Mikos, 1992) curriculum Level I, Unit 3.

4. Manipulating Shapes.

Students play the familiar game whereby one student creates a

shape and turns it into some object. That object is then passed to another student who, in turn, changes it into another object and then passes it on. This delightful activity stimulates students to use their imagination for the purpose of developing rapidly changing images.

5. Visual Poetry.

Students listen to or read certain poetry selections and visualize the poem. Next, students draw or act or sign (or a combination of acting and signing) a visual representation of the selection to the class. This activity encourages students to visually represent the essence of the poem without language (see Appendix B for one such poetry example).

6. Mime Activities.

These activities need little explanation. Both aid students in expressing meaning visually.

7. Visual Problem Solving.

Locate or create various problems that can only be solved by visualizing the answer, or that can best be solved by using a visual symbol to manipulate relationships (see Appendix C for some examples of this type of activity).

F. Blocks to Visualization.

It is important to discuss blocks to visualization (Stauffer, 1990; 1992) with both ASL and interpreting students. Interestingly enough, fatigue and excess tension are two of these blocks, something that both students and interpreters experience in abundance. Therefore, the active process of interpreting, which contributes to these blocks, can diminish the student's ability to visualize.

STRATEGIES FOR VISUAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN INTERPRETING STUDENTS

All of the activities described for use with language students are appropriate and beneficial also for interpreting students. There are, however, additional exercises and activities that can be used with interpreting students to assist them in applying visualization skills to the **task** of interpretation. These activities, as with the previous activities, can be provided either in the classroom or in a workshop setting.

A. Concepts for Interpretation

Students interpret concepts which may not have standard signs by

first visualizing the concept, describing it, and then moving on. Some examples of these types of concepts include: HOEDOWN, DAM, FLEA MARKET, TELETHON, RAFFLE, etc. Explore with students what strategies they typically use when they encounter a concept they do not know how to interpret. You may find, as I have, that most students will respond with such strategies as: fingerspelling, signing something they think may be close to the concept, and/or skipping it and moving on. For some concepts such as HOEDOWN, FLEA MARKET, etc., a description of the activity/event provides a better interpretation than the use of other strategies such as fingerspelling, skipping over, etc. This ability becomes another "tool in their toolbox of interpreting strategies." It is possible also to use this exercise with concepts that have standardized, though not visually conceptual, signs such as LIBRARY, CHURCH, COMMITTEE, PARTY, etc. Students become quite skilled at visualizing the concept and describing key elements, which in turn, gives them confidence in interpreting.

B. Practice with Translated Texts.

Provide students with written translations of texts which are heavily laden with specific ASL concepts or present interpreting challenges, such as changing perspectives and directions. Students should work in small groups to develop a group interpretation that is presented to the class. This allows students to discuss ideas with other students, have the time necessary to explore ways to interpret difficult passages, and allows each student the opportunity to share his or her best thinking with other students without being put on the spot individually (see Appendix D for some examples of visually laden texts).

C. Sign to Voice Practice.

Locate or create videotapes of native signers relating an event, explaining a process, or telling a story which are not visually laden. Discuss ways to fluently and naturally voice visual descriptors such as classifiers. Often visual images occur in pairs which can create voicing difficulties. Visual images can also be used to aid in comprehension of fingerspelled words. One excellent videotaped text is a monologue description of how to prepare a fish

dinner from Monologues '90, produced by Gallaudet University, Department of Linguistics and Interpreting.

D. Describing Scenes.

Use of excerpts from legal transcripts of events that include detailed scenes such as murder scenes or traffic accidents. Students work from differing witnesses' testimonies to set up the scene and show the events while keeping the relationships between locations and persons accurate. This activity is more appropriate for skilled interpreters and/or advanced level interpreting students.

E. Conceptual Accuracy.

Selected texts which are laden with multi-meaning English words are especially good for educational interpreters who are more experienced with English-based sign systems. It is best to present these texts on audiotape and discuss conceptual sign choices with students. Discuss with students the importance of interpreting meaning rather than words and how visualization can aid in this process. (For an excellent source of materials for practice with

conceptual accuracy, see Dyer, 1989.)

SUMMARY

While many of the above activities are not necessarily new or particularly innovative, the use of these activities in a planned, purposeful way to enhance and **tap** visual abilities is novel. The response, from students and interpreters alike, to information and activities presented here has been very positive. People who have participated in these activities reported that they have been successful in applying what they learned to their own settings, whether it be ASL classes, interpreting classes, or interpreting tasks. With conscious effort and some attention, students and interpreters validate that visualization is a skill that can be strengthened. The successful learning of something new provides them with a sense of professional advancement, while others experience success by improving their skills through the application of what they learned and through practice of these exercises.

CONCLUSION

The ability to visualize, that is, the ability to create and

manipulate mental images, is an inherent part of the interpreting process. Students must learn to recognize and strengthen their ability to visualize while learning ASL. These skills must be further strengthened and tapped while learning to interpret. However, these skills are not systematically assessed or taught in most interpreting programs today. With very little effort, development and enhancement exercises can be incorporated into the classroom or provided through in-service seminars and workshops. Activities provided in this paper are not meant to represent a definitive

list, but rather serve as a beginning for instructors who want to incorporate visual development and/or enhancement exercises in their programs.

It is hoped that future endeavors in the area of visualization will **seek** to address further the relationship between visualization and the interpreting process. The activities presented in this paper should serve as a springboard for instructors to identify others or better tools to assess visual skills and to develop additional activities for visual skills development for future sharing within the field of interpreter education.

APPENDIX A

Assessment of Clarity of Mental Imagery

Translate each of the following descriptions into a mental image. **As** you do, rate its clarity according to the following scale:

C = Clear
V = Vague, but recognizable
N = No image at all

Can you visually imagine:

1. A familiar face.
2. A horse.
3. A rosebud.
4. A body of water at sunset.
5. Your bedroom.
6. The characteristics of a friend.
7. A table laden **with** food.
8. A stop light.
9. The moon through clouds.
10. A newspaper headline.

Assessment of Control of Mental Imagery

Taking your time, translate each of the following descriptions into a mental image. As you do, rate your ability to control the image according to the following scale:

C = Controlled the image well
U = Unsure
N = Not able to control the image

Can you visually imagine:

1. A rosebud, very slowly blooming.
2. **An** airplane propeller, rotating clockwise as you face the airplane, then rotating counterclockwise.
3. A stone dropped into a quiet pond: concentric ripples forming and expanding outward.
4. A gray kitten that turns blue, then green, then purple.
5. A red apple hanging on a tree and then regressing in time, becoming greener, smaller, eventually transforming into an apple blossom.
6. A book flying away, high into the blue sky, finally disappearing.
7. A car crashing head-on into a giant feather pillow.
8. The previous image in reverse motion.
9. A table gently floating to the ceiling, unaided, and turning upside down on the way.
10. Your shoe coming apart in slow motion and each piece drifting away into space.
11. Your chair coming alive and carrying you into the next room.
12. **An** orange being cut into five equal pieces and the pieces being arranged in three different patterns.

Source: McKim, 1972

APPENDIX B

WINTER HAIKU

Jean Conder Soule

White confetti falls
softly from the winter sky
covering the lawn.

The trees are ice-decked;
they crack in the winter wind
and bend at its will.

Through the snow-filled air
a lone bird flies to a branch,
wary of the storm.

I toss him a crumb.
Cautiously he eyes the treat,
then swoops and feeds.

Could we not be friends?
I would give you bread and seeds;
you give me courage.

Source: Unknown

APPENDIX C

Visual Problem Solving

Create a mental image of the following stories as I tell each one to you. Use the picture and images you form to solve each problem.

Imagery-generating, problem-solving scenarios:

1. My house faces the street. A boy walks by my house in the morning, walking towards the rising sun. with my house at his right. Which direction does my house face?

ANSWER: North

2. *Larry* is languishing in jail outside the U.S. The jail has multiple locks on the door: the walls are made of concrete which extend two stories into the earth, and the floor is made of packed earth. In the middle of the ceiling, eight feet above Larry, is a skylight just wide enough for his emaciated body to squeeze through. The cell is totally bare, so there is nothing he can climb on to reach the skylight. One night, in desperation, he got an idea. He dug a hole in the floor and escaped through the skylight. How?

ANSWER: He used the dirt from the hole to climb up to the skylight.

3. Two policemen, sitting in their patrol car, are parked along the highway waiting for speeding violators. One of them looked up the highway, the other looked down the highway, so as to cover all four lanes. "Mike," said one without turning his head, "what the heck are you smiling at?" Explain how he could tell that Mike was smiling.

ANSWER: The car is parked perpendicular to the highway and they are facing each other as they look past each other to watch the road.

4. Pat is smarter than Lee, but not as smart as Lynn. Who is the smartest?

ANSWER: Lynn

5. When a square sheet of paper is twice folded into two equal parts and the point of intersection of the folds cut off how many holes will be seen?

ANSWER: ONE

When a square sheet of paper is folded three times into two and the point of intersection of the folds cut off, how many holes will be seen?

ANSWER: TWO

HOW DID YOU DO?

Source: Robinson. 1987; Piaget & Inhelder, 1971.

APPENDIX D

PARAGRAPHS FOR VISUALIZATION PRACTICE

Paragraph I (placement, spatial relationships/organization)

When I entered the room, I could see that the person living there had expensive tastes. On the wall to my right was a fine painting with a special light focused on it from the ceiling. On the floor was a thick carpet and nice, soft chairs spaced comfortably apart. A bear-skin rug was on the left side of the room in front of the fireplace. **An** ornate light fixture hung from the ceiling, and directly opposite from where I was standing, French doors opened out onto the garden.

Source: Hoemann, 1978.

Paragraph II (descriptive adjectives)

When I was seven years old, I decided I wanted to go out on Halloween dressed as a horse. I wanted to be the front end of the horse, and I talked a friend of mine into being the back end of the horse. But, at the last moment, he backed out, and I was faced with the prospect of not being able to go out on Halloween. At this point I decided to figure out some way of getting dressed up as the whole horse myself. I took a fruit basket and tied some string to both sides of the basket's rim, so that I could tie the basket around my rear end. This filled me out enough so that the costume fit me by myself. I then fixed some strong thread to the tail so that I could make it wag by moving my hands. When Halloween came, I not only went out and had a ball, but I won a prize as well!

Source: Boles, 1980.

Paragraph III (spatial relationships)

My house faces the street. Every morning the paperboy walks by my house and throws a newspaper on my front porch. I wake up before the paperboy arrives because my bedroom faces east. Every morning the sun rises and shines through my bedroom window right into my face. It usually wakes me up. That's great in the winter when I need to get up, but not so great in the summer when I want to sleep a little bit longer. Anyway, I get up and go into the kitchen to make some coffee. Then I go to the front door, open it and there is my morning paper!

Source: Stauffer, 1990.

Paragraph IV (descriptive adjectives)

The waiting crowd heard the whine of the engines increase in intensity, signaling the approach of the presidential jet. Then the aircraft landed, gracefully and lightly. The sun glittered on the wings, making them sparkle. The president emerged, his features drawn with fatigue, and greeted the crowd of onlookers who had come to the airport out of curiosity.

Source: Seleskovitch, 1978.

Paragraph V (spatial organization and directionality)

I remember one time when I was a student in junior high health class. The teacher had all of us form a semi-circle with our chairs. I sat next to my friend, Sally, who was sitting at the right end of the semi-circle. The teacher stood in front of us and asked us to come to the front, one-by-one, face the group and give oral reports which we had prepared for homework. Finally, she called on me and I went up in front of the group. I'll never forget all those eyes looking at me. I looked over at the teacher standing to my right and then I looked at Sally. I was nervous and took a big gulp and started my report. I noticed that two girls sitting right in front of me started giggling. I hurried up and finished my report and sat down. Sally was next to go up and give her report. When Sally finished, she sat down and the teacher stood in front of us again. She broke into a big smile and said we had all done a very good job!

Source: Tan-Watson, Northup, & Stauffer, 1989.

Paragraph VI (directional verbs)

Last Saturday I flew to Miami to visit my deaf cousin, Carolyn. She had to work, so I asked if I could borrow her car to drive to the beach nearby. She started teasing me and telling me she hated me because of my easy life. I told her I pitied her for having to work. She was nice enough to loan me her new car. I invited her to go with me, but she said no, maybe another time. So, I started on my journey. I drove to the beach and spent a long time walking up and down looking at the water and the people. I noticed that all the people were looking at me, too. I must have looked like a tourist! It started to bother me that I had her new car and was at the beach while she had to work. I decided to call her. I wanted to see if she could join me for lunch. I found a pay phone and called her, but she was not at work. Suddenly I felt a light tap on my shoulder. I turned around, and guess who! Yes, it was my cousin. She had come to take me to lunch!

Source: Stauffer, 1990.

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

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INTRODUCTION

Discourse Analysis is the subfield of linguistics which studies textual level features such as cohesion and register. Morphology, (which is concerned with the ways in which units of meaning are combined to form lexical items), and syntax, (which is concerned with how lexical items are combined to form utterances) are often studied in isolation from the context in which language occurs. The study of discourse, however, requires that one pay attention to contextual factors. We must consider both the linguistic context (i.e. the other utterances occurring within the same text) and the non-linguistic context (i.e. the social situation in which the discourse takes place).

Interpreter trainers have traditionally concerned ourselves primarily with lexical and syntactic units. In evaluating students work, we have asked the following questions: 1. Is the

target language (TL) sign/word used by the student an appropriate equivalent for the sign/word used in the source language (SL)? 2. Are the grammatical structures used by the student correct in the TL? In the field of Sign Language Interpretation, we tend to pay particular attention to students' production of ASL. We attempt to determine whether what they are producing is pure ASL or some form of signed English. While these questions are certainly important ones, they give us only part of the picture. We also need to ask whether the discourse as a whole is appropriate for the target language. This is where discourse analysis comes into play.

USE OF WRITTEN TRANSCRIPTS

An important tool of discourse analysis is the written transcript. Discourse level features occur throughout a text or a portion of it. Analysis of these features depends on the ability to

see and compare two or more utterances. Written transcripts greatly facilitate this process. For example, to study a feature such as cohesion, one must be able to observe the devices that link utterances to each other. When utterances are written, they are in a static form, allowing us to analyze and talk about the devices that are used by both speakers/signers and interpreters.

The use of written transcripts, while useful, is not without its problems. This is particularly true for ASL. In transcribing English, we need only choose the written symbol which has come to stand for a spoken word. ASL, however, has no written form, so ASL transcription is much less straightforward. Because of this, linguists have devised intricate transcription systems for encoding signs. These systems are, unfortunately, too cumbersome for use by interpreting students. In fact, they are rarely used by linguists, other than for the study of fine phonetic features.

The system that is most often and most easily used is one based on English glosses of ASL signs. Obviously, this method has serious limitations. There is no one-word-one-sign correspondence between ASL and English, so the choice of an English word to use for any given sign is problematic. In addition, English glosses fail to capture many of the visual aspects that give structure to the language

(e.g. use of space). It is also difficult to capture non-manual markers this way.

To alleviate some of these problems, English glosses have been supplemented by particular types of symbolic and diacritic markings. These markings indicate certain phenomena such as fingerspelled loan words (e.g. #JOB), classifiers (CL:VEHICLE-MOVING-IN-A-STRAIGHT-LINE), and pronouns (PRO.1). Other types of information is included in parentheses (e.g. CLEAN (cont.) - meaning the sign CLEAN is produced with the movement associated with continuous aspect). Non-manual grammatical markings are indicated by symbols for the process in question (e.g. 't' for topicalization, 'q' for yes/no questions, 'mm' for a non-manual adverb, etc.). The appendix contains a description of the glossing conventions I have found useful.

As stated above, one of the major problems in using glossing systems has to do with the choice of an English word for a particular ASL sign. The semantic range of an English word rarely, if ever, matches that of an ASL sign exactly. Clearly, one needs to take account of the context (both linguistic and non-linguistic) in which the sign occurs. A particular sign will be glossed differently in different contexts.

Oddly enough, being forced to grapple with this particular problem may actually benefit students. They are forced

to pay attention to context in order to find the gloss that is most appropriate for a particular occurrence of a sign. They are immediately challenged with the difficulties inherent in the process. Thus, they learn first-hand that signs and words do not have direct translations, and that we must always take into account the context when deciding how to gloss a sign. This helps them to break away from the dictionary-dependence identified by Colonomos (CIT 1992).

I find written transcripts to be particularly useful in teaching translation. Translation is generally thought to involve written documents in both the TL and the SL. In a strict sense, this is not possible in ASL/English translation, because ASL has no written form. The primary principle of translation, however, is that it is produced over time. Interpretation, on the other hand (both consecutive and simultaneous) is produced in real time. In translation, one has the luxury of re-working the TL text, allowing the translator to produce a TL text that is as near perfect as possible. The perfection of the translation is limited only by the skills of the translator, whereas the perfection of an interpretation is also limited by the factor of time. The translator can change and correct the TL text as much and as many times as he or she wishes to. The use of transcripts greatly facilitates the process of ASL/English translation. Using

transcripts, the student is more able to pay attention to discourse level features such as cohesion. They can clearly see that the devices used in the SL are often quite different from those used in the TL. This type of analysis helps them to identify the discourse level strategies that are most appropriate in both languages.

Written transcripts are also extremely helpful in evaluation of students' work - both self-evaluation and teacher-controlled evaluation. Because a transcript is a static form, students are able to do more in-depth analyses of the strategies that they are using. This helps them to more clearly identify those strategies that are successful and appropriate and those that are inappropriate. The transcript is also quite helpful for the teacher. We do not have to rely on our ability to make snap judgments about on-going discourse. Using transcripts, we have the advantage of time, allowing us to make more thoughtful comments on students' work.

USING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN THE CLASSROOM

Discourse analysis is used in my classes in several different ways. At first, students are asked to analyze prepared interpretations. Several commercially made tapes are available for this purpose. Particularly useful at first are those tapes that contain two or more TL versions of the same SL text. It

is often difficult for beginning interpreters to grasp the idea that there may be more than one 'correct' interpretation for a SL text. When two or more expert interpreters are working with the same SL text, they are bound to produce TL texts that are different in many ways. In analyzing these differences in the TL texts, students more clearly see that two interpretations may be different but are, nevertheless, both an adequate rendition of the SL message. In other words, even though the TL forms are not 'similar', each interpreted version may be 'equivalent' to the SL text. Using in-depth analysis of two different TL versions of the same SL text helps them to understand this difference between messages that are 'similar' and those that are 'equivalent'.

This process also helps students understand the differences between transliteration and interpretation. In transliteration, we strive to produce a message that is 'similar' in form to that produced in the source language. In interpretation we strive to produce a message that is 'equivalent' in meaning. Through discourse analysis, these differences become quite noticeable. Two transliterations of the same SL text will exhibit many more similarities than two interpretations of the same text. (Again, commercially made tapes are available for this purpose.)

Becker (1982) identifies an important aspect of the translation process. He states that a language will always have both 'exuberancies' and 'deficiencies' in regards to any other language. Languages develop in ways that make them particularly suited to the cultures which use them. Thus, Eskimo languages have many different words for 'snow', while English has only one. English has many different words for sounds, while ASL has many different signs for ways of seeing or looking at things. In other words, English is exuberant in relationship to ASL in terms referring to sound but deficient in terms referring to sight. In producing an equivalent message, we must work within the bounds of the 'exuberancies' and 'deficiencies' of the TL in comparison to the SL.

As stated above, discourse analysis is also a helpful tool in translation. Students in my classes only begin to produce their own translations after they have spent approximately two months analyzing prepared interpretations. They are asked to do an in-depth discourse analysis of the SL text before they begin to translate it. In their analysis, they are asked to pay attention to such things as cohesive devices, register, speaker affect, culturally sensitive material, etc. They must then keep all of these factors in mind when

they begin to translate the text into the TL.

I like to begin these translation projects as group work. In class, the groups are asked to do analyses of the work of another group and then to discuss this with the entire class. At first, all groups are given the same text to translate, so that inter-group comparisons can be made. Later, students do individual translation projects. At some point, they are allowed to choose their own texts to work with. However, they are always required to vary the kinds of texts they are working with -i.e. if their first project is a story, the next might be a formal lecture.

Discourse analysis is used less when students move into consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. However, in these classes it is an extremely helpful tool for evaluation. Occasionally students are asked to produce videotaped interpretations to be analyzed. They may be asked to focus on one particular aspect of the text (e.g. culturally sensitive material), or to do a general analysis, looking for their specific strengths and weaknesses. Those areas that are identified as weaknesses can be focused on in future projects.

HOMEWORK EXERCISES

The exercises that follow can be used in class or can be given as

homework assignments. They can be used as individual or group projects. I usually prefer to alternate group work with individual work. Both individual and group work are important. In group work, students learn from each other. In individual work, students learn to think on their own. You may choose to use the same texts for each homework assignment, or you may choose texts that you find to be particularly suited for the specific phenomenon you are focusing on in each assignment.

This type of exercise necessitates the use of written transcripts in addition to videotape, particularly at first. For the first couple of assignments I provide the students with transcripts that I have prepared. In subsequent assignments, they are asked to do their own transcriptions. Transcription (particularly of ASL) is quite difficult and time consuming so it is important not to assign texts that are too long. I usually assign a text of about three to five minutes for a bi-weekly homework assignment. The first week can be spent on transcription. These can be reviewed for accuracy during the class meeting. During the second week, students work on the analysis. For hearing students, I begin with ASL as SL and English as TL, since native speaker intuitions are quite helpful when analyzing the TL forms.

The following are several examples of the type of homework assignments that are given to my classes:

INTRODUCTION TO EXERCISES 1,2 AND 3

You will be shown a portion of a talk entitled "Househusband". You will then see this portion of text again and listen to the interpretation of it into spoken English. You will hear two interpreted versions of it. You will then be given written transcripts of the original text and the interpreted versions. You will analyze these texts, looking for the following:

EXERCISE 1: IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT INFORMATION

Background

All discourse contains implicit information. Some of this information comes about because of the structure of a particular language. The following is an example from English in which some information is left implicit.

Yesterday morning I got up early, had a hasty breakfast, and dashed out the door.

In this example, certain information is left implicit, but it is clear what is meant because of the grammatical structure of the language -i.e. English has a rule

which says that verb phrases can be strung together without repeating the noun phrase. Interpreters need to be aware of what can be left implicit according to the grammatical rules of the languages they are working with.

Other information can be left implicit because of discourse concerns, such as question and answer sequences:

- a: How many people came?
- b: Ten

B's answer doesn't explicitly state what the number 'ten' refers to (i.e. the number of people that came).

More problematic for interpreters, is information that is left implicit because of cultural or situational knowledge that is shared by some or all participants:

Yeah, DPN, that was an exciting time. People from all over the country were there. Nobody did any work all week.

Here a great deal of culturally sensitive material is left implicit. Those unfamiliar with Deaf Culture would not know, for example, that 'DPN' stands for the Deaf President Now movement. They would not know that 'there' in the second sentence refers to Gallaudet University, etc.

Conversations between intimates can often be impossible for outsiders to

understand. This is largely because much information is not stated directly - i.e. it is implicit, as in the following example:

You know you were right about Jim. He did it exactly like you said.

Without knowing about the situation in question, one has no idea what 'it' refers to.

Project

Analyze the transcript of the original **ASL** text to see what information is left implicit. Then look at each of the interpretations. Pay particular attention to information that is implicit in the original text, but is made explicit in the interpretation. Say something about why you think the interpreter decided to make it explicit. Notice any differences in the two interpreted versions.

EXERCISE 2: COHESIVE DEVICES

Background

Textual cohesion has to do with the way in which a group of utterances are related or tied to each other. Without these ties, we would have an unrelated series of utterances rather than a cohesive text. Speakers/signers use many different devices to create cohesion in their discourse. One such device is the use of implicit information. Leaving some

information implicit makes a text more cohesive. In the following, all information is explicitly stated:

Yesterday morning I got up.

Yesterday morning I had a hasty breakfast. Yesterday morning I dashed out the door.

Compare this with the following in which some information is left implicit, making it much more cohesive.

Yesterday morning I got **up** early, had a hasty breakfast, and dashed out the door.

Here 'yesterday morning' and 'I' are left implicit in the second and third clauses of the utterance.

Other cohesive devices include the use of pronouns, definite determiners, and discourse markers. The following contains indefinite rather than definite determiners, no third person pronouns, and no discourse markers.

A woman came up to me yesterday. A woman tried to sell me a book. I told a woman I wasn't interested in it.

Compare this with the following in which these devices are used:

This woman came up to me yesterday. She tried to sell me a book. Well, I told her I wasn't interested in it.

A third device is thematic cohesion. Usually, one particular theme will run throughout an entire text or a portion of the text - this is the main topic under discussion. Sub-themes will also occur and these will help to tie individual utterances together. In ASL, thematic cohesion is often signaled by topicalization. Episodes will often begin with a topicalized element. The element to be topicalized may be an object, character, or event that is carried over from prior discourse. It may also be a subtheme within the general topic of discussion. The following comes from a talk about being a 'househusband'. Each time the speaker mentions a new task, it is topicalized. These duties are subtopics within the general theme of 'household duties':

+
CLEAN HOUSE PRO.1
RESPONSIBLE

4
WASH DISHES ONE
IMPORTANT MUST PRO. 1
CREATE

t
COOK FOOD PRO.1
RESPONSIBLE

Project

Identify cohesive devices in the original text. Then look at each of the interpretations to see whether the devices they use are the same as or different from the original and from each other.

EXERCISE 3: REGISTER

Background

Register refers to the level of formality or informality used in the production of any text or portion of a text. The model for register variation most often cited in the field of Sign Language Interpreting is one proposed by Joos (1968). He posited that there are five linguistic 'styles'. These are (in order of formality): intimate, casual, consultative, formal, and frozen.

The intimate and casual styles, he says, are both quite informal. They are characterized by frequent deletions of phonological segments and certain lexical items such as articles, subject pronouns, etc. Intimate style is used only among people who know each other well and the style is marked by a great deal of 'private language'. Casual style is similar to

intimate style but doesn't include private language.

Consultative style is used in everyday conversation among speakers who do not know each other well and who are conducting some kind of business. Some colloquial forms will be used in these situations, but there is usually an emphasis on making the speech as clear and unambiguous as possible.

The function of formal language, according to Joos, is usually the imparting of some information. The type of deletion seen in casual language use is rarely seen in formal style. Frozen style is characterized by language that is formulaic and is usually found in situations such as religious services and the courtroom.

A model that I find to be much more helpful has been proposed by Halliday (1968, 1978) and expanded upon by Gregory and Carroll (1978). These authors do not see registers as discrete language varieties. Register for them is a much more fluid phenomenon. They describe register variation according to three categories of features: the field, the mode, and the tenor of discourse. The field involves the physical setting and the physical activity surrounding and defining a speech event. The mode includes the channel used (i.e. written, spoken, or signed) and involves factors such as whether the speech is

memorized or spontaneous and whether it is monologic or dialogic. The tenor concerns the participants and the interpersonal dynamics involved in their relationship.

I prefer to see register as variation along a continuum of features - one end being formal language and the other informal language. Many linguistic devices can be used to mark this type of variation. Informal style is marked by heavy use of discourse markers such as: 'well', 'you know', and '**THAT POINT**'. Deletion of phonological segments, lexical items, and grammatical markers often occurs, as well as the use of colloquial lexical items and incomplete sentence structure. Formal language, on the other hand, is marked by clear articulation of speech or signs, use of complex grammatical structures, and absence of casual discourse markers and colloquial lexical items. (For a more thorough discussion of these issues, see articles and books listed in the bibliography.)

Project

Identify where on a continuum from formal to informal language the SL text falls. What are the features that lead you to this decision? Now look at the TL texts. Where on the continuum do they fall? What are the features that lead you to this decision? If the register of the interpretation is different from that of the

original, why do you think the interpreter chose this register? Do you feel that it is appropriate for TL cultural norms? Why or why not?

EXERCISE 4: TRANSLATION

You will translate an **ASL** text into written English, using the videotape of the **ASL** text and a written transcription of this text. Take into account all of the things we have discussed in the class to date. Strive for true discourse level equivalence in your translation. Consider who the speaker is, who the audience is, the goal of the speaker, the type of event this text is part of, the register it is presented in, and cross-cultural factors that may impact on how this message would be perceived by a hearing audience at a similar event. Your translation can be as free as you need to make it in order to receive an **equivalent response** from the intended audience. Particularly, consider the issues we encountered in the analysis projects: 1. implicit information that must be made explicit in the translation, 2. cohesion and 3. register.

The text

This text is from a rally that took place on Gallaudet College campus in support of a Deaf president. The rally took place the week before the decision was to have

been made. The mood of the rally was upbeat and hopeful, full of camaraderie between the Deaf staff, faculty and students at Gallaudet and those of the hearing faculty and staff who chose to participate.

The intended audience

Imagine that you are translating this speech for a naive hearing audience who know nothing of Deaf culture and the political and personal ramifications of the rally.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed the use of discourse analysis in teaching translation and interpretation. I have mentioned some of the advantages of using written transcripts for analysis and some of the problems that arise in transcription. Finally, I have given you some examples of the kind of exercises that are given to my students. The same type of exercise is useful for looking at other areas also, such as: figurative language, culturally sensitive material, and repetition.

It is my hope that readers will find some or all of these suggestions helpful, and that you will be able to incorporate them into your own teaching methods. The bibliography should be useful

for anyone who wishes to do additional reading on topics which have been discussed only briefly here.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Since ASL has no written form, I have used written English glosses to indicate ASL lexical items. This is often troublesome, since there is no one word/one sign correspondence. Certain English words have traditionally come to be associated with certain signs in ASL. I have used these where they seem semantically appropriate. At other times I have used the English word that seems most appropriate in a particular context. The English glosses are usually written in capital letters, and I have followed that convention here. In addition, diacritics are used to indicate other phenomena. If a sign corresponds to two English words, it is written with a hyphen (e.g. NOT-YET). If the sign is a compound, the glosses for the two sign are joined with "#" (e.g. KNOW#THAT). If two signs seem to run into each other with no noticeable break between them, they are joined with "^" (e.g. THAT^PRO.3). Since the main articulators used for ASL are the hands, it is possible to execute two signs at once. When this occurs, the signs are joined with "/" (e.g. GIRL/PRO.3). Pointing signs acting as

pronouns are transcribed as: PRO.1, PR0.2, or PR0.3, depending on whether they indicate first, second, or third person. Pointing determiners are transcribed as DET. An English gloss preceded by "CL" indicates that the sign is a classifier predicate (e.g.

CL:PERSON-MOVING-FROM-LEFT-TO-RIGHT).

Fingerspelled English words have a hyphen between each letter (e.g. D-I-D). Reduplicated signs are marked with "++", "+++", etc. depending on how many reduplications occur. Other relevant information about how a sign is made is in parentheses (e.g. DOOR-SHUT (emphatic)). Aspectual modifications are also indicated in parentheses (e.g. SAME (cont) - to indicate continuous aspect). Grammatical structures other than declarative sentences are indicated with a line over the utterance in question and a symbol indicating what kind of structure it is: "q" for yes/no question, "wh" for a 'wh' question, "t" for topicalization, "rh" for rhetorical question, "cond" for a conditional, etc.

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TEACHING INTERACTIVE INTERPRETING: A GLOBAL APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Interactive interpreting settings present unique challenges to the interpreter. Interpreters need specific knowledge and skills to effectively interpret in settings where turn-taking, conversational dominance, and minority/majority status are considerations as important as the information being conveyed. This paper focuses on an approach to teaching interactive interpreting designed to help students become more aware of the issues and perspectives of all the participants in an interactive interpreting setting. This global approach to teaching interactive interpreting allows students to participate in and analyze the many aspects of interaction and the impact that interpreting has on interaction.

INTERACTIVE INTERPRETING

Interactive interpreting courses have long been part of interpreting programs. In my experience they are often defined in contrast to monologic interpreting. Monologic interpreting is defined as that interpreting that occurs in

classrooms, conventions, and conferences. These settings are similar for interpreting because they consist of little interaction among participants; rather, there is one person who presents for a specified period of time while the audience is seen as a passive recipient of the presentation. Such presentations are characterized by the length of the presentation, and as being highly content-oriented, filled with facts, figures, and names. Such settings are often said to be more difficult settings for interpreters, especially students.

Interactive interpreting (also referred to as dialogic interpreting) is defined, in contrast to monologic interpreting, as that type of interpreting that occurs when two (or more) people have a conversation through an interpreter. All participants are expected to be active in the discussion. These settings are characterized by the shortness of each person's turn, and the relatively limited content included in each turn. These settings are said to be easier for interpreters, especially students.

These definitions focus on the "where" and the "what" of the setting. The feature that is often ignored is the "why" of the setting--the reasons that people have for putting themselves into these various settings. It has been very easy to ignore the "why" with our old "machine model" of interpreting--the "why" was the client's problem. We concentrated only on the content. However, as we understand more and more about the nature of communication and of interpreting, it has become clear that interpreters cannot any longer ignore the "why" of a setting. There are two reasons for this.

First, in communication, a person chooses from a tremendous repertoire of linguistic and para linguistic features in order to frame the content to be conveyed. The choice of word, style, intonation, and register are all affected by the person's goals and objectives during the communication. **As** communicators, we are all acutely aware of and influenced by not only what people say, but by how they say it. **All** communication in an interactive setting is influenced by the form as well as the content. All communication in an interpreted interaction is influenced by the interpreter's form as well as the interpreter's content. Tannen (1986) discusses this concept in her book, That's Not What I Meant!, a book that is very

useful for introducing this notion to students.

Second, interpreters not only impact the emerging discussion because it is the interpreter's signs that are seen and voice that is heard, but because they also perform the interpretation based on their own knowledge and experience. Thus, when the interpreter receives a message from one person, the understanding of that message is based not only on the content, but on her/his own knowledge of the situation, the manner of presentation, and the understanding of the goals of the communication. In turn, the outgoing message from the interpreter is affected by the interpreter's understanding of what the person meant. Roy (1989) presents a very convincing analysis of the impact of an interpreter in the turn-taking of an interpreted interaction. She argues that conversations held through an interpreter are not two-way conversations, but three-way, with each of the two participants taking turns with the interpreter. Although we as interpreters know that this is how an interpreted conversation occurs, we ask the participants to believe that they are taking turns with each other. Interpreters are pivotal points in any interpreted interaction'.

If we accept that the "why" of communication is important for interpreters to understand, then it becomes clear that interactive interpreting

presents many more challenges than we have previously thought. These settings are no longer the easier setting to interpret. They involve constant analysis and re-analysis of each participant's intent, based on both the form and the meaning of the message. When we consider the importance of the impact of the interpretation on the impression made by the participants on each other, this type of interpreting provides many more pitfalls than the more one-way monologic settings traditionally considered more difficult.

Teaching this perspective is difficult. It requires that students and teachers analyze each choice that an interpreter makes, not necessarily as right or wrong, but as more or less effective based on an awareness of the content, the setting and the goals of the participants. Using scenarios has proven to be an effective activity for learning and practicing this type of analysis of interpreting.

SCENARIOS

We have long used role-playing in interpreting courses. These are used to provide interpreting settings more dynamic than those in videotapes that we have, and to provide experience in turn-taking. As a student of interpreting I never enjoyed these role-playing activities--they often became "hot-seat" settings. My only goal was to get

through it as painlessly as possible. This dislike of role-playing carried over into teaching--I never found that students concentrated on the aspects of the role-playing that I wanted to teach. Their focus was on getting through as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

When looking for more effective activities for teaching interactive interpreting, I found the activities used in second-language teaching to be a rich resource for teaching interpreting. One book that has been especially useful for working with scenarios for teaching interactive interpreting is DiPietro's book, Strategic Interaction (1987). Although not all of the activities are relevant for teaching interpreting, many are adaptable to the needs of an interactive interpreting course. One aspect that DiPietro emphasizes is the debriefing after the scenario. This is the time that I find most valuable when teaching interactive interpreting. The goal of the debriefing is always to analyze the strategies used by the interpreter to effectively deal with the participants communication needs. An essential aspect of the debriefing is the inclusion of all the participants in the scenario. This includes not only the interpreting students, but the hearing and deaf people as well. This time provides the interpreters a "safe" time to ask both the hearing and deaf people how they affected the interaction and it provides a

"safe" time for the deaf and hearing participants to comment on their reactions to interpreted interaction.

In the following section I describe the scenario activity that I use with my students.

1) Design:

Topics and Participants: Each student designs and orchestrates an interactive interpreting setting. This includes the development of a realistic idea and (optionally) a script. The topic of the interaction can be simple or complex: every scenario provides some aspect of interaction that can be difficult for an interpreter to deal with. The best scenarios are based on situations that have been difficult for the designer. By basing a scenario on an interpreting experience, the student designer has the opportunity to analyze the difficulty and to observe the strategies used by other interpreters that may be more (or less) effective. Design also involves recruiting and briefing the scenario participants. Each scenario requires at least one deaf person and one hearing person. Whenever possible, these participants are familiar with the characters they are asked to play. For example, for a scenario about a pre-nuptial counseling session, a student recruited a minister and a couple who were planning to be married in a few months. Another student designed an interview between a

mental health counselor and a client. This student recruited two counseling students who had some experience and understanding of these settings.

Using these participants provides more realistic interaction during the scenario. It also provides a great variety of personalities for the students to experience. An added benefit is that the participants often learn as much about working with interpreters as the students and I learn about interpreting for their interactions.

When it is not possible to get participants with experience in the particular setting of a scenario, students research real settings in order to provide their participants with as much direction as possible. For example, one scenario dealt with the activity of opening a checking account at a bank. The designer went to a bank and taped an interaction similar to her scenario, then directed her participants based on the live interaction.

Scenario: Scenarios are designed to be 10-15 minutes long, with 10 minutes for discussion and de-briefing with the students and the participants. It is also important to have an additional time for debriefing with only the students present (see discussion below under 3) *Debriefing*). Once the scenario is designed and the participants are briefed, the student designer also briefs the student interpreter. Designers are

instructed to brief the interpreter only if approached by the interpreter, and with only the information that someone hiring the interpreter would ordinarily provide. Depending on the goal of a particular scenario, the designer may or may not provide the "difficulty." In one scenario, a situation was set up in which a young client did not want to **talk** to a social worker because she was very angry. In this setting, the difficulty for the designer was how to interpret the anger; she informed the student interpreter of the situation so that the student would be prepared.

In another scenario, the student designer presented a scenario in which her difficulty was not the emotion as such, but her own surprise at it and her subsequent involvement in it. In this scenario, the student interpreter was not informed of the emotional context but only that an adult student had scheduled a meeting with a professor to discuss a course. In the course of the discussion, the "student" made several angry comments to the professor about the incompetence of the interpreter, blaming the interpreter for what she perceived as a failure to communicate. The student designer, and the rest of the class, were able to observe the strategies used by the student interpreter while interpreting this unexpected and difficult situation.

Once the scenario has been presented, the student designer is

responsible for leading the discussion. This involves discussing the outcome, the reactions of the participants (including the student interpreter), and comments from the rest of the class. The discussion of all the interpreting strategies used is focused on the problems the interactions caused for interpreting; the strategies the student interpreter chose in dealing with the problems; and their effectiveness in the given situation. This part of the debriefing is especially interesting and informative because of the inclusion of the deaf and hearing participants. Their reactions were often different than ours. In one scenario, the hearing person addressed the interpreter instead of the deaf person. The interpreter continued interpreting and the deaf woman very smoothly asked that the hearing person speak directly to her. Both the student interpreters and the deaf person judged it to be a very effective and acceptable strategy for interpreters. However, when the hearing person was questioned, she commented that, although it was only a brief instance, she still felt slightly ignored and uncomfortable and that this particular strategy had negatively affected her response to the deaf woman for the remainder of the interview. These everyday reminders of the impact of all parts of an interaction serve to remind students (and me) of the importance of the "why" of an interaction and of the impact of interpreting on that interaction.

2) Student Interpreter:

Each of the students in the class is assigned to interpret a scenario designed by another student. The student interpreter is responsible for preparing for the scenario in any manner that seems appropriate. Once the scenario is introduced and begun, the student interpreter is expected to function as the interpreter for the communication--to "own" the interpreting. This means that they need to be able to analyze the dynamics of the interaction as they are happening and to choose and use as many strategies as they need to make the interpreting effective.

One example of this was a scenario that appeared on the surface as a simple family reunion. The design of the scenario called for a deaf man to be stuck in a conversation with two hearing aunts of his fiancée. These aunts were unhappy at the surprise engagement and were uncomfortable with the new experience of communicating through an interpreter. They were also very displeased with their niece, who was talking with another family member instead of with them. Their annoyance and discomfort resulted in a very uncomfortable situation for the interpreter, in which the aunts consistently addressed her instead of the deaf person and constantly interrupted her voicing of the deaf person's comments. In the course of this

scenario, the student interpreter tried a variety of strategies for dealing with these problems, some of them "classic" textbook strategies and some less traditional. She handled the first attempt of the aunts to talk to her instead of to the deaf person by telling the deaf person that she would explain how to work with an interpreter to the aunts--a textbook strategy. This done, she went back to interpreting the aunts' response, which was another direct question to her rather than to the deaf person. Realizing that the first strategy had not been effective, she tried interpreting the question to the deaf person and letting him answer. The deaf person answered, but the aunts interrupted his answer, both talking at the same time. The interpreter explained that she needed each to take a turn so that she could interpret everything--again, a textbook strategy. Both aunts nodded understanding and the conversation continued. They once again interrupted a comment from the deaf person, both speaking at the same time to the interpreter. At this point the interpreter tried another strategy, that of interpreting the interruption to the deaf person. This strategy did not effectively solve the difficulty. The next time it happened, she ignored the aunts' interruption and continued speaking at a louder volume over the aunts' comments. They finally stopped interrupting and the conversation became more two-sided. This scenario.

although superficially simple, provided a series of challenges that required the student interpret to constantly analyze and re-analyze the effectiveness of her interpreting strategies.

3) Debriefing:

Debriefing occurs in two parts. The first part occurs immediately after the scenario (as described above in *1)Design*). The student designer directs this part of the debriefing based on the way that the scenario actually worked out. Since this is always spontaneous (no matter how well prepared), this debriefing provides the student with an opportunity to analyze a setting and provide constructive comments on-the-spot. The focus of these debriefings is on the strategies used by the interpreters and on the reactions of the participants to them. In the family reunion example above, the variety of strategies was noticed and the student interpreter was asked to comment on why she chose them. The more classic, textbook strategies she used at first she chose because they are the expected strategies; her strategy of interpreting the interruption was an attempt to get direction from the deaf person about how he wanted to handle the situation. When she got no direction from him, her final strategy of simply talking louder than the aunts was chosen because she wanted to

finish a sentence before she started their comments.

When the deaf person was questioned about this, he commented that he (as his character) was glad the interpreter had explained her role so that he did not have to, and that he really did not notice the interruptions because he was not very interested in the conversation. He kept wondering where his fiancée was and why she had stuck him with the aunts. Likewise, the aunts did not notice the final strategy in which the student interpreter ignored their interruption and talked over them. They (as their characters) were feeling uncomfortable and did not mind who talked and did not really understand that they were being ignored. The outcome was that the conversation continued in a smoother fashion, which was the outcome they all wanted. Thus, the choice of strategies was deemed effective for that situation.

This debriefing with the outside participants provides the students with a variety of perspectives on their performance and their function as an interpreter. It also provides them with the opportunity to learn how to discuss these topics with non-interpreters. This skill is part of learning how to interpret interactive settings.

The second part of the debriefing occurs after the outside participants leave. It is important for the students

and the teacher to discuss the strategies as interpreters and it is important to discuss the design and logistics of the scenario. While the debriefing with the outside participants provides the experience of discussing interpreting with outsiders, this second debriefing provides the time for discussing problems and questions with other interpreters who understand the interpreter's perspective.

4) Evaluation:

As with all classroom activities, this activity is evaluated. The student is evaluated in two areas. First, the design and preparation of the student's scenario is evaluated. The student designer is required to write a summary evaluation of the scenario in terms of its design, preparation, action, and discussion. The grade for the scenario is based on my evaluation of the same points and on the completeness and accuracy of the student's summary evaluation.

Second, the student's interpreting of someone else's scenario is evaluated. The scenario is videotaped and the student analyzes her/his interpreting, writing a detailed analysis to be turned in. I also analyze the interpreting, and my grade is based on my analysis and on the depth and accuracy of the student's own analysis.

CONCLUSION

Scenario activities have proven to be valuable in teaching interactive interpreting. They provide situations and challenges that other activities, such as videotape practice and real life, cannot provide. Tapes, although very useful for practice, do not allow for the basic fact of interaction--each turn is dynamic, built on the preceding turn. Students know that their performance will never affect the outcome of a taped interaction. Thus they never know if the strategy they choose is really effective. Real life interpreting does not often provide the time for discussion and analysis immediately after the event. Interactive scenarios, when designed carefully and focused on the effectiveness of interpreting strategies, provide a safe environment for students to practice and analyze.

These scenarios also provide a source of constant learning for me as a teacher. By giving the students the responsibility for making the scenarios work, I learn what they have understood and what they have not understood. It helps me to listen to my students--it's nerve-racking while it's happening, but after experiencing the scenarios and the discussions with them I find that our discussions of interpreting become much more professional, as one interpreter to another, rather than as a teacher to a student. The scenario provides an

opportunity for the integration of the many skills that students need in order to become interpreters, especially the skills of personal interaction and dynamic analysis of communication.

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