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Editorial

Intersecting Interpreting Modalities

Jemina Napier, Editor¹

Heriot-Watt University

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 5 of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education*. This editorial will be short and sweet, so you can get straight on with reading the great collection of articles that we have for you in this issue.

The number of submissions to *IJIE* has grown considerably in 5 years. In particular, and evidenced by the contributions in this issue, we are seeing more submissions dealing with spoken language interpreter education. Interpreting processes and practices are generally acknowledged to be essentially the same across spoken and signed languages; only the working modalities are different (Kellett Bidoli, 2002; Napier, 2011; Nicodemus & Emmorey, 2012; Pöchhacker, 2004)—however, this is a noteworthy distinction that gives rise to others. Spoken language interpreters work between two linear languages, whereby one word is produced after another, and the message is built up sequentially. Signed languages, however, are visual-spatial languages that can convey meaning by creating a picture using space, location, referents and other visually descriptive elements. Signed language interpreters are therefore constantly transferring information between two alternate modalities, which requires the representation of information in very different ways.

Furthermore, signed language interpreters predominantly work in the simultaneous mode as there is no acoustic interference between a spoken language and a signed language. And unlike spoken language interpreters, signed language interpreters seldom take notes in either consecutive interpreting or simultaneous interpreting (Kellett Bidoli, 2002; Napier et al., 2010), because they need to maintain direct eye gaze with deaf signers while either receiving signed input or producing signed output.

The simultaneous approach presents an additional challenge to signed language interpreters due to using two different language modalities (Padden, 2000/2001). Padden argues that when using the consecutive technique, signed language interpreters can operate in one mode at a time, whereas when working simultaneously, the two modalities are co-occurring, putting additional strain on the interpreting process.

The growing body of work that acknowledges the intersections between interpreting modalities (Pöchhacker, 2004) means that we are starting to see an increasing number of researchers and educators collaborating across modalities—as I discussed in the Editorial for Volume 1 of *IJIE* (Napier, 2009). This intersection is also witnessed by my own career move to the U.K., to join the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies at Heriot-Watt

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University in Edinburgh. In the department we provide languages and translation and interpreting tuition across a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Arabic, British Sign Language, Chinese, French, German, and Spanish, and a new project has been established to provide intensive training for Scots Gaelic interpreters, so that they can qualify to work in the European Parliament. Our intersections are further evidenced through the second iteration of the European Masters of Sign Language Interpreting (EUMASLI) Program, which is jointly delivered through the cooperation of three universities: Heriot-Watt University (U.K.), University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal (Germany), and Humak University of Applied Sciences (Finland). These intersections highlight the exciting changes taking place in the discipline of interpreting studies. Thus this issue of the journal compiles articles that discuss interpreter education research or issues that could easily be applied across modalities.

In the Research section of this issue, we feature three articles from authors that discuss aspects of interpreter education from different locations worldwide. Michaela Albl-Mikasa from Switzerland presents findings from a study that explored how pedagogical principles from Teaching English as a Foreign Language can be used in interpreter training, especially for training conference interpreters to deal with the nonstandardized forms of English that are used in conference settings. Ineke Crezee and Lynn Grant from New Zealand discuss a classroom-based research project in which they investigated how to teach interpreting students to develop skills to deal with idiomatic language. Jim Hlavac from Australia reports on findings from a recent survey that sought to glean interpreter practitioners' and examiners' views as to whether interpreters should be trained and tested in telephone and video-link interpreting.

The Commentary section features two articles. Sarah Bown from the U.K. discusses how best to encourage university graduates to be reflective interpreter practitioners; and Fatima Cornwall from the U.S.A. shares teaching activities that she uses in the classroom for students to develop their vocabulary.

Debra Russell, as editor of the Open Forum section, once again brings us an intriguing interview with a key contributor to interpreter education. In this issue she interviews Brandon Arthur, who founded StreetLeverage.com, a Web site that features cutting-edge commentaries from leading scholars and practitioners in the (predominantly North American) signed language interpreting sector. The issues that they debate cover a wide range of issues, including topics concerning how to best provide training for new interpreting students. The site is a rich resource not only for interpreter educators for their own edification, but also for interpreting students who can critique and reflect on the content of the articles.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, and take away further food for thought in terms of your own interpreting pedagogical practices.

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Teaching Globish? The Need for an ELF Pedagogy in Interpreter Training

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Abstract

Research on the global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has made headway since the 1990s. In this effort, language teaching and pedagogy have been one of the major areas of research, concentrating on how to make nonnative English learners more effective participants in ELF interactions without taking the native speaker as a benchmark. However, this research has not considered settings of mediated communication. Even in the field of interpreting studies, it is only recently that the implications of ELF on the interpreters' activity and profession have become an object of research. Findings that the "ELF condition" adversely affects the interpreters' task call for an ELF pedagogy in interpreter training, which helps students prepare for changing working conditions. On the basis of a 90,000-word corpus of in-depth interviews with 10 professional conference interpreters, this article details preliminary suggestions for an ELF orientation in interpreter training and aims to spark a debate on such an orientation.

Key Words: English as a lingua franca (ELF), conference interpreting, interpreter training, ELF pedagogy, raising awareness, accommodation strategies

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1. Introduction

In the new millennium, conference interpreters are confronting an unprecedented development: the global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF). David Crystal (2012), the author of *English as a Global Language* (2003), estimates that there are now five nonnative English speakers for every native speaker. Against this background, and in view of the fact that—according to studies carried out by Neff (2007) for the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)—the majority of source speeches at conferences are produced in English, interpreters' perceptions of an overwhelming and rapidly increasing number of nonnative English speakers at conferences can be taken at face value. No other development since the invention and introduction of the technology for simultaneous interpretation after World War II has changed the working conditions and professional self-image of conference interpreters to such a degree. What is happening before their eyes is, in fact, a reversal of the “path from bilingualism to multilingualism” (Feldweg, 1996, p. 89, my translation), in other words, the path from bilingual consecutive meetings to multilingual simultaneous international conferences, which characterized the 20th century and shaped the conference interpreters' profession as we know it (cf. Feldweg, 1996). Interpreters now witness the evolution from multilingual conferences back to bilingual “ELF conferences,” where communication is in nonnative English and one local language, as more and more conference participants heavily rely on nonnative English and other language booths fall by the wayside. In a questionnaire survey completed by 32 professional conference interpreters, I found general agreement that this development adversely affected their work on the macro level (e.g., professional standing, job satisfaction) as well as on the micro level (regarding comprehension and production processes and capacity management; cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2010).

Accordingly, conference interpreters can be heard to complain about “Globish” or “BSE” (“Bad Simple English”). Using these labels is not a sign of ignorance of the more academic terminology and its conceptual distinctions (namely, “English as a global language,” “world Englishes,” “English as a lingua franca”), but an expression of the negative connotations interpreters associate with it (see AIIC, 2012, for the “lurking beast”; Reithofer, 2010). It should be noted that interpreters do not refer to Globish in terms of the trademark, which is “a set of reduced forms that can be prescribed for use in rudimentary communication” (see <http://www.globish.com>), but to “the actual globalized use of English as a lingua franca the world over” (Seidlhofer, 2011, pp. 153, 157). It is this usage, over the past 20 years, with which the young ELF research discipline is concerned (cf. Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011) and that is increasingly presented to interpreters in source speeches at conferences. Although interpreters are undoubtedly theoretically uninformed participants in ELF communication, their apprehensions about ELF developments are real and have only very recently become the object of closer scrutiny (e.g., Albl-Mikasa, 2010, 2012a, 2013a, in press; Reithofer, 2010, 2011). The implications of ELF on translation/interpreting were not previously considered in ELF research activities (cf. Cook, 2012; Mauranen, 2012), and case studies in the field of interpreting studies concentrated on the effect of nonnative accents on the interpreting task (especially Cheung, 2003; Kurz, 2008; McAllister, 2000; Sabatini, 2000) and the advantage of having the nonnative speaker's mother tongue as one of the interpreter's working languages (cf. Basel, 2002; Kurz & Basel, 2009; Taylor, 1989).

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On the basis of the most recent studies, I have identified adverse effects of ELF usage on interpreters' activity in the following areas:

1. *Market developments* (cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2010): The need to display high quality interpreting services is increasing in the face of (a) fiercer competition (in addition to smaller numbers of language booths, interpreters are increasingly contracted only for highly technical and complex events, because the easier ones are conducted in English) and the necessity to give customers good reasons to offer and pay for interpreting services, and (b) interpreters' feelings that they must defend their reputation as language experts and dissociate themselves from unprofessional uses of English. The interpreters' dilemma is that, at the same time, it has become increasingly difficult for them to deliver high quality. Extra cognitive effort is required in comprehension of nonnative speakers, to unravel unorthodox structures, idiosyncratic lexical phrases, and unfamiliar accents, and in production for nonnative listeners, to adjust and accommodate to varying proficiency levels.
2. *Bilingual mediated conditions* (cf. Reithofer, 2010): Contrary to unmediated ELF communication settings, conference interpreters work in monologic speech event settings where there is little room for interaction, meaning negotiation, or pragmatic strategies (such as explicitness, accommodation, let-it-pass and collaborative coconstruction), so that they are deprived of the standard means of compensation that usually facilitate and ensure successful ELF communication.
3. *Processing and capacity management* (cf. Albl-Mikasa, in press): The growing number of nonnative speaker participants at conferences poses a challenge to the interpreter's capacity management, which, as detailed by Gile on the basis of his well-known effort models (2009), is taxed under favorable working conditions, let alone under less favorable ones, for example, strong accents (also in the case of native speakers); complex, technical, and dense source texts; less able speakers/source-text producers; and less adequate technical, booth-related, and other situational conditions. The "ELF condition" adds an additional burden, in that the interpreters' automated processing is undermined. A case study involving nonnative speakers and a trainee interpreter (cf. Albl-Mikasa, in press) suggests that the activation and retrieval of established links between source and target language items, of settled-in transfer routines, and of ready-to-use translation equivalents may be impeded because incoming (nonnative source language) items are different from those learned and encoded by the interpreter and, consequently, do not match with previously encoded and stored items (see the "principle of encoding specificity" in van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983, p. 335).

Herein lies, in fact, one of the handicaps that can be identified for interpreters in times of ELF: ELF is "a new type of English, a hybrid language, a kind of 'pluralized English'" (House, 2012, p. 173) confronting the interpreter with unexpected and impossible to expect idiosyncratic formations. As Seidlhofer and House point out,

what ELF research is increasingly yielding insights into is precisely the hybridity and dynamism, fluidity, and flexibility of ELF interactions. . . . Much of ELF is negotiated ad hoc. . . . ELF discourses are creative local realizations, or performances, of a global resource that continually gets appropriated and re-fashioned by its speakers. (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 111)

The vast majority of ELF speakers are *per se* bilingual or multilingual speakers, which means that transfer from other languages and code-mixing are common in ELF interactions. (House, 2012, p.174)

Although the "dynamic and adaptive use of language resources" (Dewey, 2012, p. 142), or the creative, innovative and cooperative use of linguistic means of expression and communicative strategies (cf. House, 2012) are the very basis of effectiveness in lingua franca communication, it is exactly this nonconformity with patterns of usage and the unconventional use and appropriation of phrases and expressions that may become obstacles in the interpreting context. Thus, the great diversity of ELF source speech that interpreters receive makes it difficult for them to prepare for such eventualities in an assignment situation. As a result, according to interpreter reports, this inherent variation in the global forms and functions of English can hamper well-established automatisms (cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2010) and undermine routine inference processes (cf. Albl-Mikasa, in press). Therefore, what is seen as a major asset for users of English in unmediated lingua franca conditions may become a liability for interpreters

in mediated communication when these nonnative English users participate. Although it is almost impossible to “preempt” ELF usage, conference interpreters and interpreter trainers need to find ways to prepare, at least, for what can be expected.

As outlined above, efforts to develop a “pedagogy of ELF” (Dewey, 2012, p. 153) have so far been restricted to unmediated ELF communication or, more specifically, to second-language teaching. In that context, the challenge for the English-learning classroom lies in helping teachers to reconcile the reality of ELF as a noncodified form of English, which displays high levels of diversity and plurality, with inherited and internalized ideals of a codifiable, monolithic form of standard English (cf. Dewey, 2012); focus is placed on accommodation strategies, intercultural and pragmatic competence, flexibility, and tolerance of variation (cf. Jenkins et al., 2011). Turning to interpreter training, it will be important to cater to changing working and processing conditions and to consider new requirements and (sub)competences resulting from ELF developments.

Based on a 90,000-word corpus of in-depth interviews on interpreter competence that I conducted between January and December 2011 with 10 professional conference interpreters working in the German market (cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2012b), I designed a (process and experience-based) model of interpreter competence that incorporates ELF-related skills. In the present article, I present a follow-up analysis of the reports in that corpus with a view to providing preliminary suggestions for ELF-oriented interpreter training. The aim is to give an impetus to further research into more substantial didactic measures.

As described in Albl-Mikasa (2012b), the corpus data were collected as follows: the interviewees, four female and six male interpreters, were recruited (the criteria being their availability) from the 32 respondents who had filled out the questionnaire in the 2010 survey. At the time of the interviews, all were working as freelance conference interpreters in the German-speaking market: one for the E.U., two for the E.U. and in the private market, and the other seven in the private market. Two had a working experience of 30-plus years, two of 20-plus, and the other six of about 15 years. Nine had German as their A language and English as B or C, and one had an English A and a German C (some of them also had other C languages); eight of them were members of AIIC. Each interview lasted for 60 to 70 minutes, and the word-for-word transcriptions (disregarding prosodic and other paralinguistic features) range from 7,000 to 11,000 words each. For easier reference, the 10 interviews were coded from I-1 to I-10 in alphabetical order.

2. Suggestions for an ELF Orientation in Interpreter Training

The “pedagogic challenges that follow from English being increasingly used as a European and global lingua franca and from the theoretical and empirical insights ELF research provides” have been described by Kohn (2011, pp. 86–87; see also Kohn, 2007) for foreign language classrooms. From a social constructivist angle, Kohn identifies these challenges on the following three levels: (a) students having to know about ELF, (b) students’ ability to understand nonnative speakers of English, and (c) students’ production competence. When applied to interpreting, the corresponding levels to be distinguished for an ELF orientation in interpreter training are as follows: (a) awareness of developments, requirements, and attitudes regarding ELF (interpreter trainees have to “know about ELF”); (b) (source text) comprehension (interpreters must be able to “understand nonnative speakers of English”); (c) (target text) production (interpreters must reconsider their “production competence”); moreover, in this context, it also seems appropriate to take into account implications for (d) the level of transfer.

Generally speaking, all dimensions of the interpreters’ processing—comprehension, transfer, and production—may be affected by nonnative English conference participants. However, this does not apply to all interpreters with English as one of their working languages in the same measure. Interpreters with an English A, at least those who are working predominantly into their mother tongue, are confronted with nonnative speakers to a much lesser degree. Interpreters with an English C will have to deal with nonnative speaker input in the comprehension phase, but they do not have to be concerned with the production process in the sense that they do not have to accommodate to nonnative English listeners. It is, therefore, the English B interpreters, especially those in the private market who provide interpretation from and into English, who are most affected by the developments sketched out above. They bear the brunt of mediated ELF communication because not only do they have to cope with ELF-induced reception problems, but they also must invest additional accommodation efforts in the production process (see Section 1.3. below and Albl-Mikasa, 2010). An ELF orientation in interpreter training, therefore,

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proceeds from an initial distinction between language pairs, directions, and versions and further distinguishes the different processes that the measures to be designed should target: *comprehension*, *transfer*, and *production*, complemented with an *awareness-raising* component.

2.1. *Comprehension*

From the interpreters' point of view, the range of different accents on the part of nonnative speakers is basically an extension of the general problem of speakers who are difficult to understand. Interpreters confess to "struggling" with strong native accents (e.g., Scottish or Texan) or marked individual speaking styles (e.g., mumbling or fast presentation rate) in a similar way. Examples given by one of the interpreters refer to the swallowing or twisting of sounds: A German speaker may say "Kontabilität" instead of "Kompatibilität," [compatibility]; an English speaker may say "[kwo:|fen'a:]" to mean "quarter of an hour"; and an American speaker may say "winner" meaning "winter" (I-1).

Difficulties posed by nonnative source speeches go beyond unfamiliar accents:

It's much better when people speak their own language, because, if not, you can't follow their words very often, the way they think; I know the way a usual German thinks, but sometimes you don't even understand the pronunciation which is wrong. The other day a French [man] was speaking English and he would say "merrily," which you find on a Christmas card: "Ding Dong Merrily on High," and I thought what the hell is he saying, and he said "merely." Or I know an Italian chairman who doesn't differentiate between *le* and *les* when he speaks French, so you don't know whether it's a singular or a plural. (I-2)

Another interpreter (I-6) reported cases in which pronunciation problems compounded the incorrect use of concepts. In one case, for instance, a nonnative speaker spoke of a "beer trap." What he was actually trying to say was "bear trap." But not only did he get the pronunciation wrong, he also used the wrong concept. "Bear trap" is a technical stock market term denoting an undesirable situation for short sellers (they get trapped and are forced to cover their positions at high prices). The speaker, however, was referring to some kind of mechanism that should stop large-scale financial transactions beyond a certain threshold. In the heat of the moment, this confusion made it impossible for the interpreter to figure out what the speaker was talking about. Only later did he realize what the speaker had been trying to say. This example goes to show that, in the reception process, nonnative speakers can be more of a problem for the interpreters than native speakers because difficult accents can be coupled with unconventional or even incorrect use of concepts, lexical expressions, compounds, or other structures.

Interpreters suggest that to prepare student interpreters for the multitude of voices awaiting them, they must be able to work their way into the special reception conditions and keep practicing listening comprehension. They therefore have to have ample opportunity to listen to a great variety of accents and ways of expressing things, to "develop an ear for it" (I-1, I-3). The more they get used to the foreignness, the less such expressions will appear odd and new, and the potential for derailment in the process will decrease. As one interpreter put it: "The 24th Chinese speaker may still be difficult to understand, but much less so than the first one" (I-8).

This raises the question of course materials, that is, of how to obtain recordings of original speeches incorporating all possible accents and ways of speaking in view of the great number of Englishes out there. Opportunities for interpreters to familiarize themselves with nonstandard ways of expression are much harder to come by because they do not—as in the case of difficult native-speaker accents—have an established broadcasting industry behind them. Thus, whereas French may be spoken differently by Québécois or Northern Africans, and German differently by Austrians or the Swiss, interpreters can get broadcasts from Quebec, Algeria, Austria, or Switzerland. With global Englishes, it is only where English is an official language (e.g., in India) that similar resources are available and can be tapped. Unfortunately, such resources are not available or are inaccessible as far as a greater number of nonnative speakers from all over the world are concerned. As the interpreters interviewed point out, however, the field is not so wide open that one would need to present hundreds of local Englishes or teach each and every variety. It is rather a matter of presenting trainees with typical examples of frequent or prototypical (African, Eastern European, Indian English, etc.) varieties "to make them develop the habit of decoding and the skill of coping with pronunciation" (I-3). Special ELF units or modules should be introduced in

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advanced semesters, in which the more prevalent accents are presented. To meet the challenge of tracking down a variety of nonnative speeches to be presented to the students as source texts, the Internet is at least one source (e.g., of original speeches by people like Bishop Tutu, who was mentioned as an example in I-3). A particularly valuable source is the TED global conference website (www.ted.com).

Learning targets are probably best kept moderate at the beginning. According to the interpreters interviewed, it is important to lower the frustration level, given the common interpreter mistake of missing whole sentences because of a preoccupation with one's anger about the speaker or about source text difficulties. The idea is to proceed from the "What is this language supposed to be?" feeling to the "Oh, okay, I do understand at least something" experience (I-3). In this way, students can begin to build upon the experience that it does not take too long to find one's way into some minimum understanding, and that it is acceptable to content oneself with rendering what is feasible.

With regard to teaching methods, instructors will have to be quite inventive to devise new forms. One way could be to involve foreign language students (on ERASMUS² or scholarship/grant programs) and ask them to participate in discussion groups to be interpreted by the students. As pointed out (in I-5), prediscussion meetings of interpreters and participants may help students to build up expectations and guide hypotheses about speaker styles. Another method may consist of having the nonnative speaker give a speech on the basis of a well-prepared manuscript, followed by a question-and-answer session; this would make it clear to students that marked differences may have to be expected between well-formed and "freestyle" nonnative speech. The student interpreters' task will inevitably be influenced when speakers are not able to keep up the presentation level (in terms of register, style, and lexicon; see also Section 1.3. below) in answering questions. In this way, students could gain early insights into the kind of situations they ought to expect in their careers.

Finally, such practical training is ideally founded on or combined with a theoretical basis, that is, knowledge about the language-specific structures and surface realizations, which typically rub off from the L1 onto the lingua franca English (for psycholinguistic explanations of L1 to L2 transfer effects, see Albl-Mikasa, 2013a). The interpreters interviewed reported of individual differences typical of particular languages and felt that it would lower the surprise effect if students were acquainted with such features. They underlined that French and Spanish speakers tend to swallow the *h* sounds, and Spanish and Italian speakers tend to be much more redundant and phatic, so that the interpreter has to wait for them to actually "not only speak but say something" (I-2), before putting it into (in the case of English) much more compact and reduced target language speech. German English speakers often have an unnecessarily epical way of putting things ("it is like this that it is snowing" from *es ist so, dass...* or "to delete without replacement" for *ersatzlos streichen* instead of simply "to delete") and Eastern Europeans refrain from using articles ("I thank chairman," "I give you chair"). Although these examples provided by the interviewees seem to be somewhat self-explanatory, ELF corpus analyses may yield more valuable insights in this respect, which can be fed into linguistics courses about typological features and structures of relevant languages; these courses can then be combined with a more practically oriented course that deals with the prototypical instances found with nonnative English speakers. This approach may have limited success when it comes to non-European speakers, especially Asian speakers, such as Indians, Japanese, and Chinese. Interpreters find that they pronounce English words in ways that are, at times, unrecognizable to Western ears, which can make interpreting "context-based guesswork" (I-1). Whereas here it might at least be helpful for students to be alerted to what to expect, so as to minimize irritation, a theoretical base could still be useful to back up the more unconscious skills acquired from practicing the decoding of unfamiliar accents during practical courses in the booth.

2.2. Transfer

The interpreters interviewed pointed to the necessity of a strategic reorientation of the transfer process. In their experience, all strategies "that are generally required for the interpreting task" (I-3; see, e.g., Kalina, 2000) will have to be "put to even greater use" (I-3) when interpreting for nonnative speakers. This applies to condensation (leaving out information without distorting the message) as much as to streamlining of the output to save resources for comprehension, or to a dependence on visual input (I-1, I-

² ERASMUS is a widely implemented, successful student exchange initiative as part of the E.U.'s Lifelong Learning Programme (cf. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm).

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3). Preparation strategies (cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2012b) become even more important to support inference processes. As one interpreter put it:

Maybe preparation will become even more important (for inferencing in the very situation) and so will the use of visual support—my personal *ultima ratio* is to read off a sentence from the PowerPoint slides that matches the prompt provided by the speaker in order to avoid saying nothing for a couple of sentences and, thus, losing the listeners' trust. (I-3)

Another interpreter made the following comment:

If, in my capacity as interpreter, I do not know an English version of an L1 expression used by the speaker, I have to rely on my evasion strategy: If a plausibility check makes me find that something can't be the case, I leave it out or beat about the bush, later perhaps I try to guess what was meant and see whether I can still straighten things out. (I-1)

The same interpreter made a point also stressed by others (I-4, I-9):

In my opinion, the best way to cope with such difficult situations is to keep calm and get more practice. If I allow myself to get upset, this will block parts of my analytical skills, which I need for decoding and recovery. As an interpreter trainer, I would try and gently bring home to the students that such situations do arise, that everybody gets strained in the beginning, but that it is possible to practice how to deal with them. (I-1)

Against the background of these statements, ELF-specific adaptation of the interpreter's strategic repertoire may include (further) development of the following strategies:

- *Evasion* (make plausibility check → in case of implausibility, omit for the time being or gabble at large → keep guessing the intended meaning as the speech continues → when things are clearer decide whether to set things right or not)
- *Don't panic* (keep cool under all circumstances—getting excited blocks analytical capacities and prevents recovery of intended meaning—be assured that this happens to all interpreters all the time, that such situations are not indomitable and that one can only improvise)
- *Substitution* (when the worst comes to the worst, stick with the PowerPoint slides—which need to have been prepared well—or just keep reading them off, so as not to say nothing and lose the listeners' trust)

It may be helpful for students to become acquainted with the inventory of strategies in theory first to then test the respective strategies in the booth. Because of considerable evidence of a “shared languages benefit” (Albl-Mikasa, 2013a, p. 105), that is, the supportive effect of having the nonnative speaker's mother tongue as a working language, testing might more usefully be implemented under varying conditions. Trainers might have students experiment with the differences in nonnative source text producers under conditions (a) when they share the nonnative speaker's mother tongue as an L1, (b) when they have the nonnative speaker's mother tongue as one of their B or C languages, and (c) when they are fully unacquainted with the nonnative speaker's mother tongue. This would give students opportunities to discover how variations in nonnative speaker input affect their strategic behavior and their coping strategies in particular. Moreover, practical in-booth courses could be complemented with further contributions from the theory of interpreting. Models such as Gile's (2009) effort models can be very useful in explaining to beginners what ELF means to their capacity management. They could come to understand that the particular ELF conditions, which sometimes require the interpreter to “invest more concentration and to think outside the box” (I-6), may take a heavy toll on what Gile calls the “total available processing capacity” (2009, p. 170). Against such theoretical understanding and knowledge of possible coping strategies, it may become easier for students in the early stages to experience what it means to juggle and allocate resources under particular ELF conditions.

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2.3. *Production*

In the case of producing English as an A or B language, the interpreters interviewed agreed that for a nonnative audience, simpler is better. Interpreters are contracted to provide a service and to promote and facilitate communication; when working for nonnative listeners, there is simply no place for sophisticated idiomatic expressions: “What is the use of throwing in expressions like ‘I would concur with the chairman’ or ‘that’s a sticky wicket,’ when no one understands them?” (I-2); “What is a Czech or Turkish salesman supposed to do with English phrasal verbs?” (I-10). Finally, “in the European Parliament, the new countries all speak English only and take the relay from the English booth. If that is too English an English, they will not understand it” (I-4). Generally speaking, interpreters do make an effort to adjust to the perceived proficiency levels of their audience, unless their resources are overtaxed (Albl-Mikasa, 2010).

Another case of the accommodation required in ELF contexts, and a corollary of ELF developments—at least in the German market—is that interpreters may have to cater to members of the audience who are native speakers of the language of the source speech. Two interpreters commented on Hungarian (I-6) as well as Czech, Polish, and Macedonian (I-2) speakers giving their presentations in highly “problematic” German (Eastern European speakers do, at times, use German as a *lingua franca*), which prompted the native German listeners to take earphones and listen to the English interpreter, in the hope that the interpreter might be able to make some sense of what they themselves considered to be unintelligible. Apparently, it is not uncommon for conference participants who are supposed to listen to the original presentation to switch over to the English interpreters. For the interpreters, this means that they have to be prepared for having to cater not (only) to the intended audience, and that this may require further accommodation. In fact, one of the main problems as far as accommodation is concerned is that it is often difficult for the interpreters to tell exactly who is listening to them and, hence, how or to what extent to accommodate. Interpreters sometimes use the microphone to find out whether somebody is listening at all and to get people’s reactions (turning round, nodding; I-2). There is general agreement among the interpreters interviewed that knowing the nonnative profile of the recipients does in fact influence their rendition; however, in the case of large-scale conferences with a mixed native and nonnative audience, there is little they can do in terms of accommodation.

Because accommodation has come to be a standard service that interpreters provide and regard necessary (this is confirmed in the questionnaire survey; Albl-Mikasa, 2010, and in the interviews), students should get opportunities to interpret for or in front of nonnative addressees in simulated conferences. In this way, they can develop a sense of what is appropriate and how to proceed. At the same time, instructors will have to take into account that it can be rather unsettling for trainees to have to invest a lot of effort into building up a high-level language competence, including sophisticated idiomatic phrases and expressions, only to be told that they must now learn how to suppress them. It may also be discouraging for student interpreters to learn that conference participants may sometimes expect them to make sense of what they themselves fail to understand.

That students should get theoretical input regarding strategies also applies to accommodation strategies, which are only partly covered by the conventional (i.e., non-ELF-related) inventory of production strategies as described, for instance, by Kalina (comprising, among others, “restructuring, paraphrasing, condensing or expanding information, and the use of prosodic or non-verbal features,” 2000, p. 7). It is, therefore, for the instructors and theoreticians in the field of interpreting to devise or empirically investigate the more ELF-specific accommodation strategies based on the general ones, which, according to communicative accommodation theory (CAT),

can be used to modify the complexity of speech (for example, by decreasing diversity of vocabulary, or simplifying syntax), [and] increase clarity (by changing pitch, loudness, tempo by repetition, clarification checks, explicit boundary devices and so on). (Giles & Coupland, 1991, p. 88)

An important production strategy is, finally, that of “changing registers” (Kalina, 2000, p. 23). The interpreters in the questionnaire survey preferred native source speakers not least because of their “higher register” (Albl-Mikasa, 2010, p. 135) and felt the necessity of “cutting down on style and register” (Albl-Mikasa, 2010, p. 238) when adapting to a nonnative audience. As pointed out in I-5, nonnative speakers (unless they read out well-prepared manuscripts) may find it difficult to keep up an appropriate register throughout the source text (especially in spontaneous question/answer sessions), which makes it

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necessary for interpreters to level out register shifts in target text production. Dealing with changing registers may, thus, gain in importance in the context of ELF communication and may have to be incorporated into interpreter training.

2.4. *Raising Awareness*

With the number of nonnative conference participants increasing exponentially, interpreting students must gain an awareness of the implications for and effects on their work. They should be informed about ELF-related developments in general and their ramifications for the profession for which they are training in particular. More specifically, they should develop a consciousness of what these developments mean for the activity that they are carrying out, that is, how deviations from a learned standard affect their processing.

First and foremost, students must know what to expect, so as to avoid unnecessary irritation and to reduce the surprise effect, which can “block analytical skills” (see Section 1.2. above). This includes an understanding of the challenge nonnative speakers represent, because their performance may

range from the unproblematic (since many nonnative speakers do, of course, speak very good English) to the difficult but comprehensible and the truly unrecoverable, and it is only when they open their mouth that the interpreter will know. (I-3)

Raising awareness in this way will also help interpreters to adopt the right attitudes. There are many unpredictable variables in ELF contexts, which are difficult to prepare for, but if interpreters know that the ensuing strain is a fact of life experienced by most interpreters, and that one gets used to it (see above), they will be able to muster indispensable “tolerance and patience” (I-4), according to the interpreters interviewed.

Being part and parcel of a service that aims to facilitate communication, this attitude also involves a certain degree of “empathy” (I-7). One interpreter reported a useful exercise offered in a summer school on consecutive interpreting.

The coach pretended to be a Russian lady speaking English with the typical difficulties in speaking and understanding. She was interpreted into German and received interpretation into English. The coach demonstrated a great acting talent, displaying among other things the psychological insecurity of the woman, who was not only unfamiliar with the interpreting situation, but also far from proficient in English. This made me realize that unintentionally I acted snottily towards her, to which “the Russian lady” immediately reacted. (I-5)

It is, of course, asking a great deal of inventiveness of instructors to simulate such situations, especially because “it should not become burlesque” (I-5). However, it would be useful for students to get similar practice opportunities.

Even more impalpable is perhaps the kind of empathy, or “sensitiveness” (I-9) and “intuitive sense” (I-3) to be displayed on the micro level, which applies to (a) the comprehension effort in the reception phase as well as (b) the accommodation effort in the production phase. As the interpreter in I-5 put it:

- (a) Not all Globish is totally wrong, of course. From a grammatical point of view it may be somehow correct, but it seems strangely lifeless. At this point the interpreter needs to determine to what extent she is allowed to dissolve this lifelessness without (mis)interpreting and thus altering the speaker’s intended meaning. The question is again whether one can assess what it would have been in the speaker’s mother tongue without imputing a certain tenor to him.
- (b) In adjusting to the listeners’ proficiency level, when working into English, one must not underestimate the listener, for this will not go unnoticed and will create a strange atmosphere, without listeners being able to tell what caused it.

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Such reading between the lines in comprehension and the balancing act between over- and underestimating the listeners' skills in production are a rather sensitive and subjective matter, which students should be at least encouraged to consider. Finally, tolerance is also called for when it comes to "global English corporate language," which is "a real problem, for speakers will say things like 'labalization' and the native speaker will think, 'What on earth is that supposed to mean?'" (I-2). Students should be made aware of phenomena such as *global English corporate language* and ELF in general, so as not to enter into the professional stage unprepared and get trapped from the very start.

Although attitudes such as tolerance, patience, and empathy do aim to put up with even the unbearable or unmanageable, trainees might also have to be encouraged to figure out the point at which a situation becomes fully impracticable and may warrant steps such as "professional foul." The interpreters reported that there are situations when all they can do is let the audience know through the microphone that, for want of comprehensible speaker output, it is simply impossible to render the speaker. Therefore, "one has to empower the students and give them the green light to dare to communicate to the audience that it is not the interpreter's fault when nothing plausible comes out from the mike and into the earphones anymore" (I-6).

3. ELF Pedagogy of Common Concern for ELF Research and Interpreting Studies

In light of the growing number of nonnative English speakers at conferences and the implications reported by professional interpreters, there can be little doubt that interpreter training must undergo changes with a view to integrating an ELF orientation. Traditional methods will not do, for "what is the use of practicing all those beautiful idiomatic expressions on the basis of source texts and speeches from Obama and European Parliament delegates, when 99% of conference participants simply do not talk like that?" (I-3). At the same time, interpreter training can only serve to lay the foundation for ELF-related competences, which are, to a large degree, built up through real-life professional conference experience and the practice of authentic ELF speech.

On the basis of the above analysis of practical interpreter experience, it can be said that an ELF pedagogy for interpreter training will have to aim to acquaint interpreter students with the most current features and realizations of different Englishes (Asian, African, European, etc.) alongside those of different native standards (Midwestern, Southern American, Northern English, Australian, etc.). It cannot, and need not, cover the full range of possible accents and ways of speaking, but should rely instead on abstraction, which, more generally speaking, is an integral part of learning and practicing. The important thing is to prepare students and boost their decoding skills by using a range of sound bites, and to unleash their sense for extrapolation, which will lay a foundation for making other manifestations more accessible. In addition, students may find it useful to train for the fast alternation of native and nonnative English speakers to develop rapid reactions to what they conceive of as quite different varieties. For such practical training, it seems reasonable to introduce specific ELF modules at an advanced stage of the interpreter training program. It is up to empirical ELF pedagogy-gear studies to find out more about the ideal point of introduction, length, composition, and other aspects of such modules and their integration into the more standard parts of the course.

The practical (in-booth) part could be coupled with providing a more general knowledge base about ELF-related matters. This refers to a wider understanding of current global and social developments (ELF and globalization, ELF and multilingualism, ELF and language contact, etc.) as well as language-specific subjects. Information about typological features of languages or rather prototypical properties from native languages that regularly feature in nonnative speech will be highly useful for up-and-coming interpreters. The theoretical linguistics courses in university interpreter education might thus be developed into a more targeted framework to cover such language typological principles and regularities as may be useful in real interpreting settings.

A related question is the extent to which interpreters must be familiar with other languages. For just as a large passive vocabulary greatly facilitates the deciphering of unorthodox native-speaker input, so too is knowledge of several foreign languages of great value when it comes to making sense of nonnative speech (see the "shared languages benefit" in Albl-Mikasa, 2013a). It is somewhat paradoxical that, accordingly, interpreters with several C languages may have an advantage over interpreters with only one

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A language plus English B, although the latter are those most directly confronted with the challenges of ELF in conference contexts (see Section 1 above).

Finally, this raises the overarching question of the role of Standard English. From the interpreters' perspective, (what they would regard as) slackening standards do not enter the picture, nor would they advocate a less norm-oriented approach to interpreter training (as Dewey, 2012, does for second-language learning and teaching). From their point of view, students will need as much exposure to different nonnative pronunciations and ways of speaking as possible to develop the necessary comprehension skills, but should continue to aim at native-speaker Standard English (or a near-native English B) for target text production. Such high-level command of the language is seen as a requirement for understanding and making sense of the different nonnative surface realizations, just as availability of the whole range of different means of expression from which to choose is considered indispensable for variable, audience-designed production:

English proficiency standards must remain as high as ever, for only those who are super-fit in English can notice and adequately react to the different manifestations and surface realizations, changeovers and crossovers that nonnative English communication at conferences entails. (I-5)

This perspective presenting the interpreters' angle contributes to ELF research by making it clear that efforts to create ELF pedagogy in unmediated or mediated contexts cannot simply take an emancipatory stance from the "Standard English rules" tradition (which is a major concern in ELF research; cf. Jenkins et al., 2011). At the same time, the interpreters' perspective must be informed by theoretical advances, for neither nonstandard English nor Standard English can or should be decreed in learner and user contexts. As Kohn (2011) points out in his presentation of "my English condition," the two are not incompatible or irreconcilable. From a social constructivist point of view, one can, by (psychocognitive) definition, always only build up one's own English. Accordingly, whether a learner or user sets Standard or non-standard English as his or her aim comes second, because he or she can only have his or her own idea or representation of this "standard" as a goal. Interpreter trainers and ELF researchers alike must therefore look realistically at the various conditions under which English is used as a lingua franca (which is, in fact, what the pragmatic turn in the study of ELF is increasingly about) and address questions such as the following: What are the source texts produced by nonnative speakers like? What are the particular difficulties they present to the interpreter? What are the repercussions on capacity management? What are the different types of accommodation efforts called for by what kind of nonnative audience? and What other factors play a role in ELF settings and may render the interpreters' task more difficult?

Given the great number of variables, factors, and hypotheses involved, redesigning interpreter training to incorporate an ELF perspective will be important work. Descriptive empirical efforts should be accompanied by publication of reports on the measures, methods, and materials found to be useful in training contexts. The collection of ELF-related material should be systematized and made accessible as open sources. ELF corpora, such as VOICE,³ TELF,⁴ or ELFA⁵ (cf. Kohn, 2011), could be exploited to filter out L1-specific ELF features to be grouped together in blocks of Englishes. Knowledge of the "family resemblances" they reflect would greatly facilitate the interpreters' work. Most of all, analysis of ELF-specific source texts and description of the resulting challenges and problem areas must get under way, so that typical stumbling blocks can be identified and viable didactic measures and consequences suggested.

Acknowledgment

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³ VOICE (Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English): <http://univie.ac.at/voice/>

⁴ TELF (Tübingen English as a Lingua Franca): <http://www.telf.uni-tuebingen.de/>

⁵ ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings): <http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/>

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Missing the Plot? Idiomatic Language in Interpreter Education

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Abstract

Idiomatic language has been defined in various ways; Dastjerdi and A'lipour (2010), for example, offer several definitions of such language use. In interpreter pedagogies, the role of idiomatic language generally has been undervalued. Interpreting Studies should take account of idiomatic language, because most interpreters acquire one of their working languages as a second language and may therefore not be totally familiar with such language. In addition, the speakers they interpret for may intersperse their dialogue with idiomatic expressions. In this article, the authors define idiomatic language and discuss its importance to (student) interpreters. They describe a study in which interpreting students were presented with dialogues taken from a small corpus of reality television programs; students were often not aware of the meaning of commonly used idiomatic language, but audiovisual information helped them deduce the meaning in context. The study demonstrated the importance of trainee interpreters being aware of idiomatic language, because unfamiliarity with such expressions may mean “missing the plot.” The authors offer some recommendations for including idiomatic language in interpreter education.

Key Words: idiomatic language, interpreter education, natural language, corpus-based interpreting studies

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Missing the Plot? Idiomatic Language in Interpreter Education

1. Introduction

This article documents a three-part research project, conducted over the course of three 12-week semesters, aimed at examining how student interpreters dealt with idiomatic language in terms of recognition and (cross-cultural) interpreting approaches. In the project, we combined investigative strands involving cross-cultural communication and pragmatics with corpus-based interpreting resources. We used a corpus of real-life documentary-style television programs featuring natural spoken language in context—ambulance paramedics, customs and immigration staff, and police officers during their day-to-day interactions with members of the public—that had been recorded for research purposes. Appropriate interpretation requires understanding commonly used idiomatic expressions occurring in natural language. In the study, we had interpreting students watch reality programs not only to test their ability to recognize such idiomatic language in their second language (L2) within the context of ambient and nonverbal cues, but also, by eliciting their preferred approach to interpreting such language, to gauge their awareness of cross-cultural and pragmatic issues.

2. Background and Rationale for Study

2.1 *The Multilingual Interpreting Classroom*

In the context of this article, we define *interpreting* as the production of oral output based on other-language input consisting of impromptu oral discourse, based on Shlesinger's definition (1998, p. 487). We chose this definition because a majority of the students who participated in the study were training to engage in either consecutive or simultaneous "dialogue interpreting" (Mason, 1999) in a range of public service settings. Valero-Garcés (2003) referred to the changing role of translation and interpreting in the public services of countries, such as New Zealand, in which there is an emerging multiculturalism. At present, the three main interpreting and translation services in the Auckland, New Zealand, area cater to the communicative needs of migrants and refugees representing up to 190 different community languages, including some languages of limited diffusion.

Interpreters have traditionally been trained in bilingual classrooms, with emphasis on A and B language consolidation and interpreting practice. Auckland University of Technology was the first educational institution in New Zealand to offer translation and interpreting programs. We established interpreting classes in accordance with those run in preparation for accreditation with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) in Australia, differing only in the language-specific nature of such courses. One of the main perspectives underpinning our pedagogical approach is that interpreter training programs should aim to develop practitioners who are aware, reflective, and resourceful (Bernardini, 2004; González-Davies, 2004). We encourage students to be aware that "they are not simply 'trans-coders' substituting word for word, but constructors of meaning, mediators of culture" (Bernardini, 2004, p. 20). Student interpreters must develop this critical ability.

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During the first year of studies, students practice consecutive interpreting of dialogues, and in later years, sight translation and consecutive and simultaneous interpreting of 300-word passages. Every week trainee interpreters are given three simulated real-life dialogues to interpret in triads, pairs, or individually in the computer laboratory. They receive language-specific formative assessment in the form of feedback from their language peers while interpreting in the classroom or through the Blackboard Collaborate Voice Authoring tool. Practice material and texts reflect the range of materials with which New Zealand-based interpreters may realistically be confronted.

2.2 *Understanding Idiomatic Language*

Idiomatic language has been described in a number of different ways, however, *idioms* have been traditionally defined as expressions whose meanings are not the functions of the meanings of their individual parts (Chomsky, 1980; Fernando, 1996; Fraser, 1970). Usage of idiomatic language is common, not just in general English (Grant & Nation, 2006) but also in the language use of professionals, who may use idiomatic language in an attempt to put patients or members of the public at ease. Interpreting students thus must develop awareness and reflectiveness in relation to their ability to choose appropriate approaches to interpreting idiomatic language (cf. Baker, 2011). In relation to translation, some authors (cf. Horodecka & Osadnik, 1992, p. 34) have suggested that replacing a source-language idiomatic expression with a plain-language translation fails to reach equivalence in terms of metaphorical meaning. Baker (1992) provided many examples illustrating the difficulties in translating idioms by means of equivalent idioms, and he suggested paraphrasing may often be the chosen approach, to avoid translators choosing near-equivalent idiomatic expressions with a slightly different emphasis or meaning. In relation to interpreting, Morris (1999, as cited in Hale, 2008, p. 115) asserted that interpreting involves “gaining an understanding of the intentions of the original-language speaker and attempting to convey the illocutionary force of the original utterance,” adding that this “understanding will be to some extent a personal, i.e., a subjective one.” Hale stated that “the interpreter’s very difficult role is to understand the intention of the utterance and portray it as faithfully as possible in the other language” (Hale, 2008, p. 115). Although it may not be possible to ever be sure about the intention behind other people’s utterances, interpreters can “be faithful to their own interpretation of the original utterance,” as that is the best they can be expected to do (Hale, 2008, p. 115). For this study, we feel that paraphrasing may be the most “risk-averse” approach to recommend to student interpreters in this context.

From 1999 to 2005, students in liaison interpreting (Gentile, Ozolins, & Vasalikakos, 1996) courses were taught 120 idiomatic expressions taken from Grant and Devlin (1999). Students would initially express surprise at the existence of expressions such as *up in the air*, *mixed bag*, *box of birds*, and *bright-eyed and bushy-tailed*, often saying that they had never heard these used. However, once they learned the expressions, students would almost invariably tell the lecturer that they now heard them used “all the time.” This experience demonstrates the importance of raising awareness of such expressions among student interpreters. It also suggests that interpreter education can benefit from research focusing on the inclusion of natural idiomatic language in class material (cf. Grant, 2007). However, simply teaching lists of idioms will not be enough. Native speakers of a language learn to deduce the meaning of idiomatic language bundles from the context in which they are used. Selecting examples of idiomatic language for use in interpreter education should ideally be based on a corpus of the use of such language by professionals involved in areas of public service in which interpreter graduates might end up working.

2.3 *Importance of Context in Understanding Idiomatic Language*

Different authors (Gumperz, 1981, 1982; Hale, 2004, 2007; Hymes, 1997) have commented on the many aspects of linguistic interaction that determine how words are to be understood in context. Many forms of idiomatic language could be described as forms of collocations. Ellis (2001) noted that L1 learners learn collocations (such as idioms) as a whole, whereas Wray (2000) commented that L2 learners learn these as “separate items.” Durrant and Schmitt (2010, p. 182) held that the collocation knowledge of L2 learners is “more likely to be the result of insufficient exposure to a language than of a fundamentally different approach to learning.” Student interpreters participating in the current idiomatic language study commented on the “informal language” use by paramedics

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and police officers in the Australian and New Zealand context, where paramedics addressed patients with “darling” and “good man!” and police officers addressed alleged offenders as “mate.” Overall, student interpreters felt such language use was acceptable in the Australian and New Zealand context, reflecting an attempt by the professionals to make their interlocutors feel at ease. However, discussing approaches to interpreting informal register and the pragmatic implications thereof is beyond the scope of this study.

In the current study, we decided to provide student interpreters with idiomatic language in its audiovisual context, in order to provide information about the many aspects of linguistic interaction that determine how words are to be understood in context (Hymes, 1997; Hale, 2007). We thought that providing the context not only would allow student interpreters to deduce the intended meaning of certain expressions, but it might also enable them to paraphrase the idiomatic language—paraphrasing being an important skill for interpreters and translators (Baker, 2011; van der Merwe, 2001).

2.4 *Corpus Studies and Interpreting*

Several authors have looked at idiomatic language use in translation studies (e.g. Baker, 1995; Kruger, Wallmach, & Munday, 2011). Shlesinger (1998) was one of the first interpreting researchers to examine applications for corpus-based studies to the area of interpreting. She explored two ways in which interpreting could be fruitfully examined using corpora, the second of which involves using existing monolingual corpora as “sources for materials relevant for testing hypotheses about interpreting” (1998, p. 1). Shlesinger argued that the field of interpreting studies “needs the techniques and methodology of corpus linguistics to make the major leap from prescriptive to descriptive statements, from methodologizing to proper theorizing, and from individual and fragmented pieces of research to powerful generalizations” (1998, p. 6). Since Shlesinger’s (1998) writings, corpus-based translation studies (CTS) has gained recognition as a major paradigm for analysis in the area of both translation and interpreting studies. Setton (2011, p. 35) succinctly described the usefulness of CTS to interpreting pedagogies: “Research in support of interpreter training and quality aims to identify the main factors in the success or failure of interpretation and the acquisition of interpreting expertise.” The present study used material extracted from an existing corpus (described in more detail below) to test hypotheses about the usefulness of including such language in interpreting pedagogies. Whereas Shlesinger (1998) looked mainly at (student) interpreters’ output, this study examined the types of input that might cause interpreters problems and the types of strategies they might apply to address such issues. An added rationale for choosing a corpus-based approach was the fact that researchers would be able to confirm the frequency of use of certain expressions as a basis for inclusion in interpreting practice material.

2.5 *Interpreting Idiomatic Language*

Figures of speech may pose a real problem for interpreters (Nolan, 2005; Santiago & Barrick, 2007). In a study, Nolan (2005) asked students of (conference) interpreting to provide interpretations/translations that conveyed the speaker’s “substantive point.” “Accuracy is more important than affectation” (Nolan, 2005, p. 77), and for figures of speech, as for all other forms of speech, the interpreter’s job is to get the gist of the meaning across to the audience. With regard to translating or interpreting proverbs, another type of idiomatic language, translators and interpreters should attempt “to grasp the underlying idea from the context” (Nolan, 2005, p. 78), a similar recommendation to Baker’s (1992) proposed best translation strategies with regard to idioms and fixed expressions. Nolan (2005) pointed out that interpreters should take care to avoid the common pitfall of not recognizing figurative or idiomatic language and translating it literally. During Nolan’s study, some students did comment that the tasks had made them realize that they had occasionally translated idiomatic expressions in the literal sense, not having recognized them for what they were.

Idiomatic language may include phrasal verbs, and these may present a problem to interpreters because their meanings are often ambiguous, can be idiomatic, and are dependent on their context. Trebits (2009), quoting Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999), also commented on the fact that nonnative speakers of a language may “lack adequate strategies to recognize and process” phrasal verbs (2009, p. 470). This comment fits the profile of student interpreters, including those in the current study. Other theorists (e.g., Koguri, Kume, & Iida,

1990) have argued for an illocutionary-act-based translation of dialogue, taking into account the sociopragmatics of the context. An example of this from the present study is a speaker commenting that young drivers “light up,” relating not to them lighting a cigarette or being enthusiastic about a new concept, but to taking off in their fast cars. Interpreters should realize that although an informal phrasal verb like “light up” may be acceptable in English in the given context, it may need to be interpreted in a slightly more formal register in certain target languages and in certain situations (Baker, 1992). This again calls for the use of a corpus of natural language from which examples for translation and interpreting are taken. Biber et al. (1998, as cited in Trebits, 2009) also argued that “a carefully compiled collection of naturally occurring language can be useful for language teaching.” Indeed, as we will argue, such a corpus can also be useful for helping student interpreters develop adequate strategies for the recognition and translation/interpreting of idiomatic language.

3. Methodology

3.1. *Corpus*

As stated above, the present study used material extracted from an existing small, specially compiled corpus to test hypotheses about interpreting pedagogies. The corpus consists of the written transcripts of language used in 80 recorded reality television programs shown on New Zealand television between 2003 and 2011, with most of them dating from 2009 to 2011. All documentaries featured “real-life drama” showing paramedics and immigration, customs, prison, and police officers interacting with members of the public. Approximately half of them showed these professionals at work in New Zealand; the other half were in settings in Australia (Australian and New Zealand English are considerably similar in terms of expressions used and also in terms of the ways speakers interact with each other).

Shlesinger (1998) mentioned that transcription fails to represent the concomitant paralinguistic dimensions of linguistic output; in other words, it is important to have information about the way in which speakers uttered a certain expression, including their tone of voice, pitch, volume, intonation, and emphasis. Features of nonverbal communication such as gaze, facial expression, or posture should also be taken into account, as they add to the overall “message.” Baker (1993) too emphasized the need to study real data. We therefore decided to present the students with audiovisual representations of the spoken language by showing scenes from reality documentary-type programs, thus providing both setting and nonverbal context.

The corpus was used for three different tasks, all based on chunks of idiomatic language taken from it: (a) an idiom recognition task, (b) three paraphrasing tasks (two of them accompanied by video clips), and (c) interpreting practice followed by a brief questionnaire.

3.2. *Participants*

The study involved students in four different undergraduate interpreting courses: liaison interpreting, advanced interpreting health, advanced interpreting legal, and telephone interpreting and videoconferencing. Students represented a broad range of sociolinguistic backgrounds, with a large majority (96%) having English as an additional language (EAL). Applicants for interpreting programs at the university are always asked about the extent of their exposure to both of their working languages, in particular about the number of years spent working with colleagues speaking the applicants’ second language (L2). This is done to ensure that student interpreters can comprehend natural and idiomatic language used in everyday contexts. Subjects in the study presented here consisted of students enrolled in four different interpreting classes in Semester 2 of 2010 (pilot study) and in Semesters 1 and 2 of 2011.

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Approval was granted from the university Ethics Committee to work with students currently enrolled in interpreting courses, and those students who agreed to participate gave written consent. The author who did not teach the students carried out the research component where students were presented with information on the study and presented with the idioms tests in class. These exercises followed Nolan's practice of presenting idioms in context (2005, p. 102), but the researchers added an audiovisual dimension to this. A total of 36 students initially signed consent forms agreeing to participate in the study. Students who chose not to participate in the research could still participate in the class without any adverse consequences. The administering of tests was carried out in Weeks 2, 6, and 10 of the 12-week course in Semester 1 of 2011. Of the 36 student interpreters who consented to participate, only 30 completed all of the idioms tests (due to absence or illness), so only findings for these 30 participants were included.

3.3. *Three-Part Study*

The study had three distinct parts. The first was a pilot study to test the participants' ability to recognize idiomatic expressions in transcripts of natural language, as well as their ability to identify the correct meaning of such expressions. In the second part of the study, participants ($n = 36$) were shown excerpts from the transcriptions of the documentaries and asked to paraphrase the meaning of idiomatic expressions used by the speakers. In the third part, participants practiced with dialogues based on the transcripts of the programs and were asked what approach they had taken to interpret these.

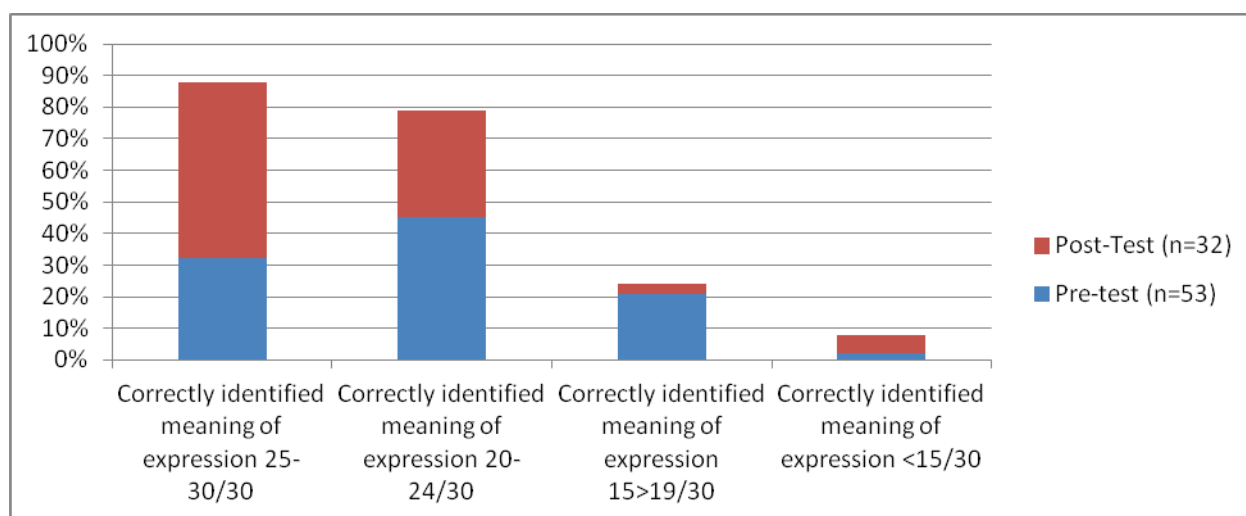
4. Findings

4.1. *Part 1: Pilot Study*

The 12-week pilot study involved a group of students ($n = 53$) in Week 2 completing pre- and posttest multiple-choice (MC) questionnaires testing their familiarity with 30 examples of idiomatic language taken from the corpus. Students were then given transcripts and asked to identify idiomatic expressions within them. Some students were able to pinpoint idiomatic expressions in context and paraphrase these accurately, whereas other students seemed to "read over the top" of such expressions without identifying them as idiomatic. In Week 10, and 3 weeks following this identification and paraphrasing task, students were given the same MC idiom recognition test they had been given in Week 2, to see if their familiarity with the idioms given had improved. We considered using a different MC test in order to avoid bias (Brown, 2004, p. 317) in the second round due to memory effects, but decided to use the same test for ready comparison of results. As it was, memory effects were not observed to be significant. Results showed that students varied considerably in their ability to recognize the correct meaning of the language excerpts given. It is interesting to note that whereas some students seemed to have become more familiar with the idioms, others appeared to have become more confused, scoring lower on the posttest than on the pretest. This was particularly true for those who had shown little familiarity with the idiomatic expressions in the pretest, suggesting that guessing might have been the strategy used by some. Low scores in the MC test also seemed to be associated with a lesser ability to recognize idiomatic expressions in the transcripts. Results of the pre- and posttests are shown in Figure 1 below. Anecdotal evidence suggested that those students whose test scores had improved had a real interest in broadening their knowledge of idiomatic language and had consciously tried to memorize any idioms they had not been familiar with prior to the pretest.

Figure 1: Results of pre- and posttests: Identifying correct meaning of idiomatic expression

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The posttest also contained a few questions asking how interpreting students perceived the importance of gaining familiarity with idiomatic expressions. Answers showed that 61% of respondents thought it *extremely important* for interpreting students to be familiar with this language, whereas 32% thought it was *very important*, and 7% thought it was *quite important* (moderately important). From various options given, respondents selected interacting with colleagues at work as the best way to learn such expressions, closely followed by watching ordinary television programs and watching reality television programs showing professionals at work (Figure 3). One student commented, “I think that sometimes I miss some form of idiomatic expressions; for instance, I recently learned that ‘with his head held high’ means ‘with confidence,’ but I take it literally [sic].”

Figure 2: Importance attached to interpreters' familiarity with idiomatic expressions

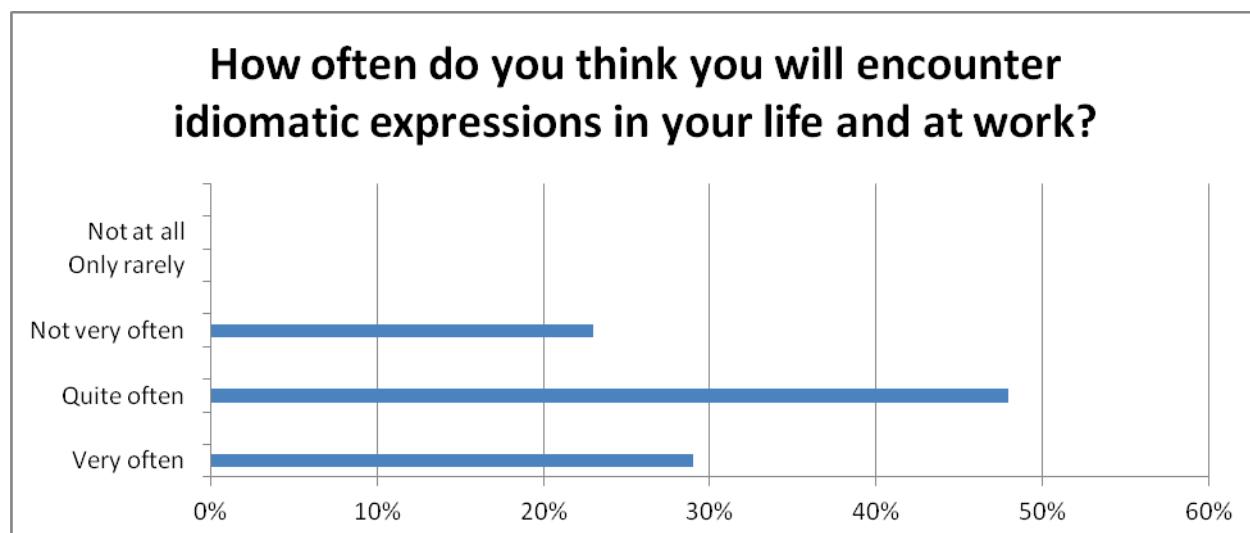
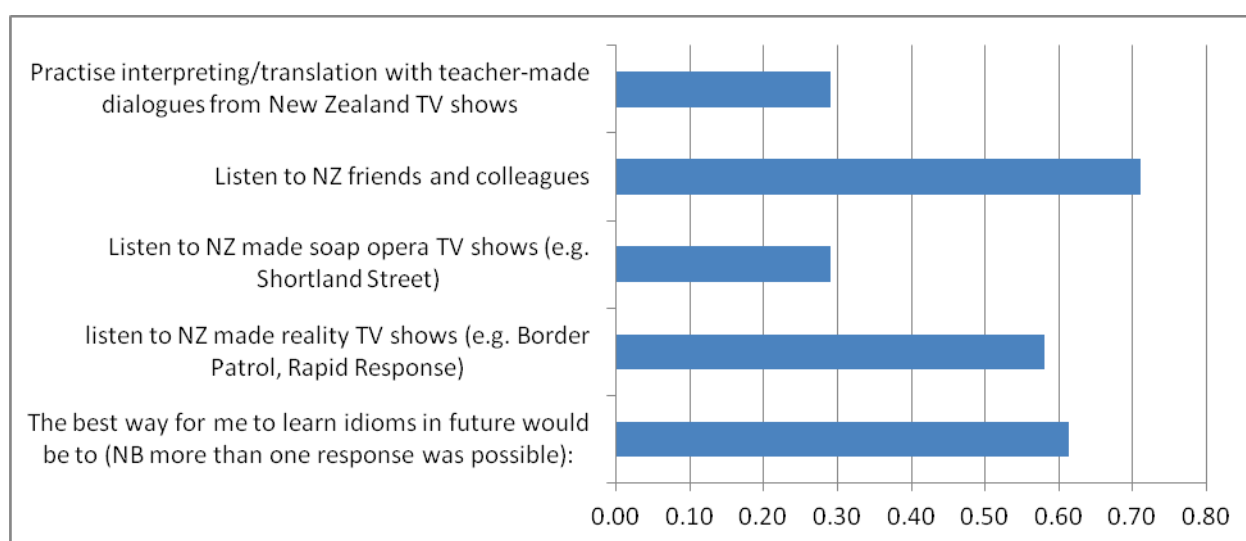


Figure 2 shows that an overwhelming majority of students in the pilot study thought they would frequently come across idiomatic expressions when interpreting and that it would be very important to be familiar with them. Figure 3 shows that a majority of students felt that actual conversations with friends and colleagues would be the best way to gain familiarity with idiomatic expressions used in New Zealand. One student wrote that the best way would be by “keeping eyes and ears open” and continued by saying, “Chinese use a lot of idiomatic expressions and a lot of them are hard to interpret into English without incorporating background information. It relates a lot to culture.” We agree that students will really only understand the language when they fully understand both their A and B language cultures.

Figure 3: Best way for interpreting students to gain familiarity with idiomatic language



4.2 Part 2

Prior to Part 2 of the study, we presented a small group of students ($n = 6$) with audiovisual material taken from one of the documentary programs for interpreting in the computer laboratory. This material showed a corrections dog handler searching the car of a prison visitor and finding some contraband. After the female visitor had given the dog handler increasingly different responses as to whether she knew the contraband was there and why she had this in her car, he ended up telling her, “Your story doesn’t wash.” Students reported that without the transcripts they would have found it more difficult to pick up on the meaning and said that they used the audiovisual context and perceived information about the relationship between the speakers on the screen to surmise the meaning of the idiomatic expressions used. Context-related information also provided clues of a sociopragmatic nature that assisted student interpreters in paraphrasing the idiomatic expressions appropriately in the target language (TL). This supported our decision to present interpreting students with a combination of excerpts from written transcripts and audiovisual material.

Over a 10-week period, a group of interpreting students ($n = 33$, on average) were shown excerpts from the documentaries in which idiomatic expressions were used. In Weeks 2 and 6 of the period, students were shown excerpts featuring paramedics speaking to patients; the excerpt shown in Week 10 showed a police officer speaking to two teenagers about drugs found in their vehicle. One of the researchers handed out the transcripts of the scene, and students then watched the scene in which the idiomatic expressions in question were used. Students were then asked to paraphrase the expressions in question.

4.2.1 Idiom Task Week 2

As part of the Week 2 idiom task, students ($n = 35$) were shown a scene in which a “boy racer” car had landed upside down in a paddock or field in rural New Zealand. In New Zealand, young males driving “souped-up” or modified cars to drive at excessive speeds are commonly referred to as *boy racers* or *hoons*. The transcript contained a total of seven idiomatic expressions for students to paraphrase. Student interpreters had average scores of 57% correct overall, with some outliers. Other items proved less straightforward, and only a few student interpreters correctly paraphrased the expression *remarkably unscathed for a chap that’s um “ripping scum off,”* with 34% “half-guessing” its meaning given the audiovisual context. The expression was used by a paramedic surveying the crash scene where the car had crashed through a gate and landed upside down in a field. Some examples of student interpreters half-guessing the meaning of this idiom were: “The driver is surprisingly uninjured compared with the scene he made through the crash” and “It is surprising that the person has very minor injuries considering the extent of the accident...ripping scum off ... describing the extent of the damage done by the car.” The most familiar expression in the transcript proved to be “he should buy a Lotto ticket,” meaning that he was very lucky (88% correct).

4.2.2 Idiom Task Week 6

In Week 6, student interpreters ($n = 34$) were shown a scene in which a cyclist in his 60s had suffered cardiac arrest while riding up a hill that had proved *one hill too many*, and he had ended up *out cold*. En route to the hospital, ambulance officers were talking about a *catch-22* in terms of how to treat the patient, as they felt the patient might have had a heart attack, but he might also be suffering from internal bleeding, so the treatment would be very different. Students were given a total of 11 idiomatic expressions in the transcript to paraphrase. Some of these appeared to be more familiar to students than others, with 77% of student interpreters correctly paraphrasing items such as *get him back into this world* and 87% correctly paraphrasing the meaning of the paramedics wishing to *have a close look* at the cyclist’s heart. Other items proved less straightforward, and only a few student interpreters correctly paraphrased *it is sort of like a catch-22* (20% correct), *one hill too many* (37%), and *absolutely cold* (53%), meaning unconscious and unresponsive.

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4.2.3 Idiom Task Week 10

In Week 10, student interpreters ($n = 30$) were shown a scene in which two teenage drivers had been stopped by a police officer. A search of the vehicle had then revealed some drug-smoking implements, and the boys were subsequently questioned about the presence of a “bong.” Students were given a transcript with 24 idiomatic expressions underlined and had to rely solely on these transcripts, because researchers were unable to access the associated audiovisual material due to technical problems. Student interpreters said they found it much harder to complete the idiom task without access to the audiovisual context, but they were still able to correctly paraphrase some common expressions. One example of an expression that students found difficult to correctly interpret was *two boy racers light up*, which could be interpreted to mean *lit a cigarette* or *took off quickly in their cars*. It was clear from the audiovisual clip that the latter meaning had been intended; however, because student interpreters did not have access to contextual information, most were unable to produce a correct paraphrase. Findings for Week 10 are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Most familiar and least familiar expressions in Idiom Task Week 10 ($n = 30$)

| Idiomatic expressions ranked from most familiar to least familiar | Correctly paraphrased | Half-guessed* |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| <i>He might be clean</i> | 87% | |
| <i>He is quickly on their tails</i> | 83% | |
| [Their] <i>troubles aren't going away</i> | 83% | |
| <i>Pot</i> [marijuana] | 77% | |
| <i>These guys are just digging a bigger hole for themselves</i> | 53% | |
| <i>It's Tony's turn to bat</i> | 50% | |
| <i>Classic, man!</i> | 33% | 10% |
| <i>He has rolled pretty quickly</i> | 20% | |
| [this street is] <i>Hoon Central</i> | 10% | 7% |
| <i>He gets bolshy</i> | 6% | 20% |
| <i>Two boy racers light up</i> | 3% | |

*The term *half-guessed* refers to replies that students almost paraphrased correctly. (See the section Idiom Task Week 2, above, for examples of half-guessing.)

4.3 Part 3

Part 3 of the study involved researchers giving students different mp3 practice files based on the course they were taking. The health interpreting students' practice files were based on a transcript taken from an Australian reality television program showing Australian paramedics and emergency department staff interacting with patients. The liaison interpreting practice files were taken from a New Zealand reality television program showing customs officers at work. After they practiced with the dialogues, students received the accompanying transcripts in which the idiomatic language items had been highlighted. They were asked to put a check next to those they were familiar with and a cross next to expressions they had found unfamiliar. They were also asked some brief questions about their approach to interpreting such expressions. Students found it difficult to interpret some “on the spot” and admitted that they had sometimes chosen a verbatim interpretation due to time constraints. A majority stated they would have chosen to paraphrase such expressions given more time. A small minority admitted they had not recognized the idiomatic expressions for what they were when played the mp3 files and had

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therefore chosen a literal interpretation. Table 2 shows the idiomatic expressions that appeared in the liaison interpreting practice dialogue, which featured customs officers discovering a large stash of illegal drugs hidden in imported couches.

Table 2: Interpreting students' ability to interpret idiomatic expressions used in dialogue taken from documentary

| Expressions | Not familiar with expression | Able to paraphrase | Able to use equivalent |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Customs are <i>sitting pretty</i> with their latest find | 33% | 53% | 13% |
| Smugglers are continually <i>coming up with more deceptive methods</i> of concealing drugs | 13% | 27% | 60% |
| Erm it looked <i>very cheap and nasty</i> and alerted us immediately | 13% | 67% | 20% |
| so let's pull this up and ... <i>Hello!</i> That there is <i>Contac NT</i> | 27% | 40% | 33% |
| ... <i>we didn't pick it up on X-Ray.</i> | - | 40% | 60% |
| But <i>despite the P traffickers' best attempts</i> ... | 40% | 33% | 27% |
| ... these couches <i>did not make it past the ports</i> | 7% | 33% | 60% |
| It took officers all day to strip the couches and <i>not one was legit</i> | 33% | 33% | 33% |
| <i>It sort of puts a smile on your face.</i> It makes you realise why we do what we do | 20% | 47% | 33% |
| And once we get all the drugs off, weighed and counted <i>then probably call it a night</i> | 20% | 47% | 33% |

Following the last task, students were again asked to rate the importance of (student) interpreters being familiar with idioms, as shown in Figure 4. They were also asked what their preferred approach to interpreting idiomatic expressions would be. Figure 5 shows interpreting students' preferred strategies when confronted with idiomatic expressions whose meaning was unfamiliar to them.

Figure 4: Awareness of the importance of recognizing idiomatic language posttest ($n = 33$)

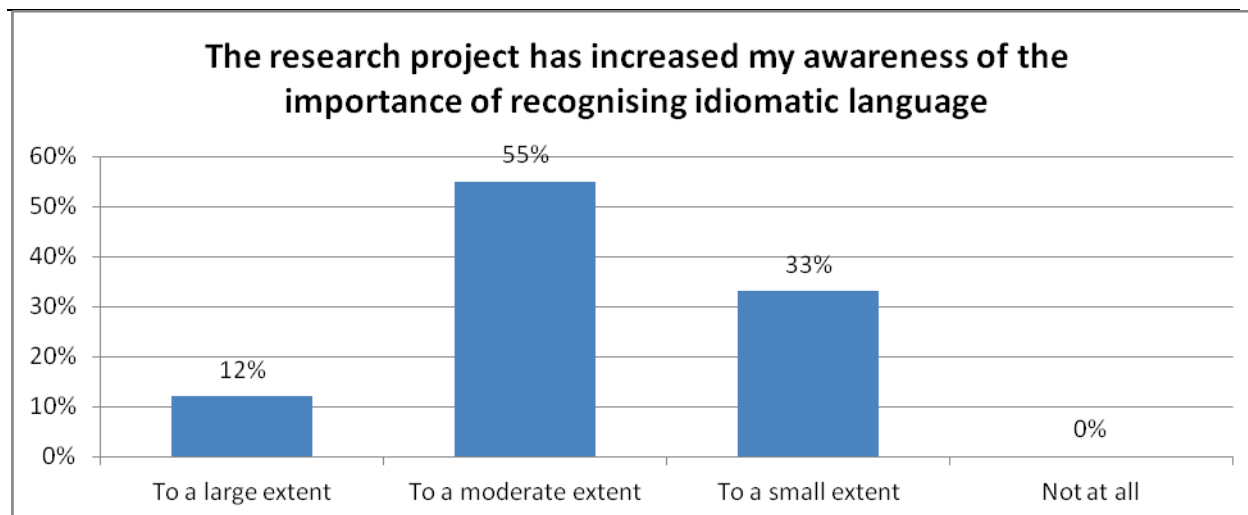
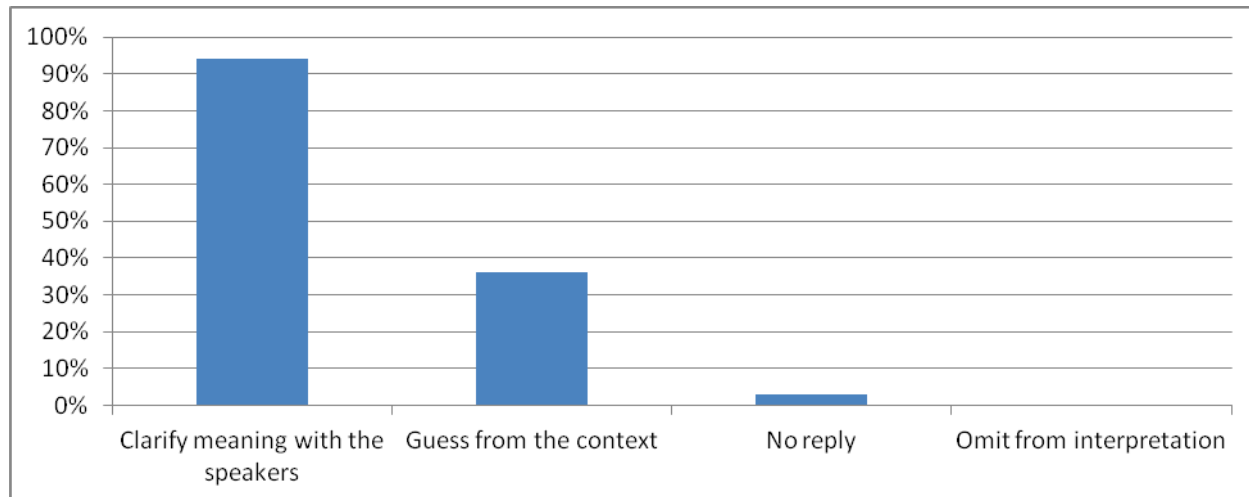


Figure 5: Posttest questionnaire: Interpreting students' strategies for interpreting unfamiliar idiomatic expressions ($n = 33$)



When the students were asked what they would do once the meaning of an unfamiliar idiomatic expression had been explained to them, 91% said they would paraphrase it. This left 6% who said they would interpret it “word for word” and 3% who said they would try another approach, without specifying which one.

5 Discussion and Recommendations

Our study lends support to Shlesinger's (1998) and Setton's (2011) arguments for the successful use of corpus linguistics to inform interpreting studies and interpreting pedagogies. The current study used excerpts from a corpus of natural language taken from reality television programs. Student interpreters in the study agreed that it is important for interpreters to be familiar with idiomatic expressions commonly used in L2 settings. The research also supports the importance of creating awareness and an ability to reflect on translation and interpreting problems and possible approaches, as advocated by Bernardini (2004) and Gonzalez Davies (2004), and the applicability of such approaches to interpreting studies. The tasks in the current study raised the awareness of interpreting students as to the frequency of idiomatic language. Not only did students realize that they had to be prepared to encounter idiomatic language in a variety of settings, but they were also encouraged to develop appropriate strategies for interpreting such linguistic items. A majority of student interpreters felt that the best way to gain familiarity with such language would be through exposure to actual conversations with friends and colleagues. Initial MC tests asking respondents to identify the correct meaning of particular expressions taken from real-life documentary television programs showed that students differed in their familiarity with idiomatic expressions. Posttest results showed that most respondents had become more aware of the meaning of particular expressions. The study also showed that student interpreters were better able to deduce the meaning of such language when it was presented to them within its original context, using audiovisual clips. This allowed them to consider important context-related aspects involving register and sociopragmatics when deciding on the most appropriate TL rendition. Most students chose paraphrase as their preferred interpreting strategy for idiomatic language (cf. Baker, 1992, 2011).

The findings of the study also confirmed some aspects of the interview procedure used at our university to identify students' ability to successfully engage in translation and interpreting programs. As stated before, aspiring interpreting students' comprehension of and exposure to natural and idiomatic language used is checked at the admission interview stage.

One of the limitations of this study is the heterogeneous nature of the participant group, particularly in terms of exposure to everyday idiomatic language use in the students' L2. As an example, a number of Korean students interacted mostly with members of their own language community and watched Korean television programs over satellite. This appeared to impact their ability to recognize and correctly interpret idioms and other idiomatic language in their L2, English. Another limitation was the possibility of recall bias occurring in the posttest comprising MC questions relating to 30 idioms taken from the reality television programs. A final limitation relates to the small number of participants at a single university.

5.2 Recommendations and Implications for Teaching

Based on our study, we offer the following recommendations to interpreter educators:

- When interviewing prospective trainee interpreters, try to ascertain the exposure they may have had to natural and idiomatic language in both their L1 and L2; because most language appears to be learned in context (Searle, 2001), ask applicants whether they have worked with native English-speaking colleagues (the more so because student interpreters indicated that this was the context in which they had acquired most of their knowledge of idiomatic language).
- Encourage student interpreters to arrange to have optimal exposure to idiomatic language during their studies; this could include interacting with native speakers of the students' L2, reading widely, and watching programs that use a lot of idiomatic language—including scripted programs such as soap operas or other programs that use actors speaking the local dialect in informal situations.
- Ensure that trainee interpreters learn the importance of initially recognizing idiomatic language to avoid “missing the plot.”
- Encourage trainee interpreters to develop strategies for paraphrasing idiomatic language, taking into account context-related aspects including sociopragmatics and register.
- Explore including natural idiomatic language in pedagogies, as this will encourage students' awareness of such items and will enable students to reflect on appropriate sociopragmatic interpreting strategies. A good

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way of doing this might be to get students to watch clips of natural language use and ask them to write down and paraphrase five idioms. Following this, the students should be exposed to a practice dialogue (in either audio or audiovisual mode) that includes idiomatic expressions taken from the same video clip.

The study showed the real importance of interpreting students being familiarized with idiomatic language occurring in everyday interactions in their L2. A majority (91%) of student interpreters participating in this part of the study expressed a desire for more practice material based on “real-life” language use. Hence, the next step of this ongoing research project will involve including more audiovisual excerpts in interpreting exercises recorded for use in the computer laboratory. This will enable students to practice interpreting dialogues based on a corpus of idiomatic language in combination with the relevant audiovisual context.

The current study identified the widespread spoken use of a considerable number of phrasal verbs by professionals such as paramedics and police officers interacting with the public, the idiomatic nature of many of these, and the idiomatic nature of much natural language. In their study of phrasal verbs, Gardner and Davies (2007) recommended a reanalysis of the British National Corpus (BNC) across major registers (e.g., spoken vs. written) within subregisters. They felt that this might offer additional insights relative to English for special purposes (ESP) or English for academic purposes (EAP), content-based instruction, literature-based curricula, and other such pedagogic aims. In this way this article encompasses several threads taken from previous studies (Shlesinger, 1998; Nolan, 2005) by focusing on the interpreted message from the point of cross-cultural communication and sociopragmatic meaning, based on a corpus of audiovisual recordings showing the use of natural language in real life situations. We hope that the findings of the small study described here will inspire other researchers to also explore the use of corpora to benefit interpreting studies.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank all students who consented to participate in the study.

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Should Interpreters Be Trained and Tested in Telephone and Video-Link Interpreting? Responses from Practitioners and Examiners

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Abstract

This article focuses on the use of telephone and video-link technology in interpreting, presenting data from current research as well as from surveys conducted with practicing interpreters and examiners. The surveys asked interpreters to report on their own experiences using such technologies and asked examiners for their impressions of the technologies' suitability as components of training and testing for certification. Technological advances in the means of audio and audiovisual communication are now being trialled in interpreted interactions, but most research reveals that an increased use of technology accompanies rather than forms a part of interlingual transfer. Responses from two groups of interpreters—practitioners and examiners—show widespread support for telephone and video-link interpreting to form components of training and certification testing, as these two communication channels become more popular with mediators (interpreting agencies) and end-users of interpreting services. The author synthesizes and presents these responses and recommends guidelines for training and testing.

Key Words: telephone interpreting, video-link interpreting, training, testing

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Should Interpreters Be Trained and Tested in Telephone and Video-Link Interpreting? Responses From Practitioners and Examiners

1. Introduction

In this article, I examine telephone and video-link interpreting in the context of contemporary practice, training, and testing from two perspectives. First, I give an overview of how contemporary technological innovations are now used in existing interpreting situations. These innovations have given rise to new means of audio and audiovisual communication between interlocutors and have led to the development of remote interpreting, namely telephone and video-link interpreting. Further, I share results of two surveys given in Australia, one to interpreter practitioners and the other to interpreter examiners who assess test candidates according to the standards of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), which form the benchmark for entry into the interpreting profession in Australia. The surveys were designed to elicit responses from practitioners in regard to current practice and the applicability of remote interpreting as a component of training and testing, and from interpreter examiners on existing testing protocols and experiences as practicing interpreters; examiners additionally provided responses on their attitudes toward the teaching and testing of remote interpreting as a component of certification. I synthesize the evidence from research studies with these survey responses to support findings that the author presents as points of consideration for trainers and testers in interpreter certification programs.

2. Role and Use of Technology in the Practice of Interpreting

Although some occupations can point to a particular innovation that led to their creation (e.g., the invention of the telephone and the creation of a job called *telephone operator*), interpreting is among those occupations that have evolved together with successive innovations over time. Evolution that has occurred with technological advances has usually been motivated by a desire for enhancement of productivity and a widening of service capability, with or without commensurate improvements in job satisfaction.

Recent decades have seen the emergence of computer-assisted translation. Contemporary technology now offers many possibilities for the ready interlingual transfer of items and texts. Laptops, notebooks, smartphones and handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs), together with voice recognition technology, now offer “instantly” translated text, sometimes even in spoken form. However, an equivalent of the notion of computer-assisted translation does not really exist for interpreting, at least not for the time being. As Donovan (2006), Veisbergs (2007), and Winteringham (2010) conclude, the immediate nature of interpreting makes recourse to textual sources impractical, if not impossible.

Reference to the use of technology in the practice of interpreting is relevant to a discussion on testing, because test design should conform to the requirement of *authenticity*, that is, the test design and content should reflect conditions and processes that interpreters encounter in their professional lives (cf. Clifford, 2005). The technology I discuss here is that used by professionals in the context of interpreting, not technological innovations that aid

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interpreters in their preparation for assignments and in general professional development (e.g., Internet searches to research content matter or already translated material, referral to databases or corpora for terminology, others' visual representation of signed interpreting, voice-recording devices for self-appraisal of verbal delivery, etc.). I provide an overview of current developments and practices in technology used in interpreting and gauge practitioners' and examiners' support for the adoption of telephone and video-link interpreting as skills that should be practiced in training programs and included as elements of testing regimes that aim to reflect current practice.

2.1. Telephone Interpreting

Telephone interpreting, used for the first time in Australia in 1973 (Kelly, 2008), now occupies a standard place in the provision of interpreting services not only in Australia, but also in most other Anglophone countries and in Western Europe and, increasingly, in other areas of the world. The market of large telephone interpreting companies such as Language Line is now global; this company now promotes its services to customers worldwide. Most telephone interpreting providers are private, although the world's second-largest, Australia's TIS, is still publicly funded.

Telephone interpreting has been widely used in medical/health care situations since the 1980s (Hornberger, 1998; Kuo & Fagan, 1999; Lee, Batal, Maselli, & Kutner, 2002; Leman, 1997). In a study of his own and others' data, Rosenberg (2007) found that two thirds of the telephone interpreting assignments he investigated were health care related and one third was commercial. Cheshier, Slatyer, Doubine, Jaric, & Lazzari (2003) reported that among community interpreters in several countries, the proportion of telephone interpreting is comparable to that of face-to-face interpreting. Kelly's (2008) comprehensive description of logistic, ethical, and personal management issues that pertain to telephone interpreting relate not only to all community interpreting settings but also to a variety of other settings, such as business and tourism. Kelly's book has a strong didactic focus and seeks to educate trainees new to telephone interpreting on issues that will increasingly confront them as telephone interpreting becomes more commonplace and expands to additional fields.

Aside from investigating and recommending protocols, few studies have examined telephone interpreters' satisfaction with telephone interpreting. Lee (2007) reported on mixed and ambivalent attitudes held by interpreters who chiefly provide telephone interpreting services. Half of Lee's participants held a low opinion of the profession and high levels of dissatisfaction with remuneration, but responded neither positively nor negatively to the medium of a telephone as the means of communication, indicating that extraneous features, rather than the technology itself, were responsible for negative reactions. Some reported feeling that "faceless" communication is even advantageous and can aid performance by not containing visual distractions (Lee, 2007). Ko (2006) went further in questioning whether interpreters' negative reactions toward telephone interpreting represented a response to their lack of familiarity with it as new users. Ko argued that the problems of fatigue, stress, and reduced concentration can be overcome with superior equipment and that, over time, long-standing telephone interpreters do frequently report reasonably high levels of job satisfaction.

Ozolins (2011) reported on the world providers of telephone interpreting services (many of whom offer testing), such as U.S.-based Language Line and Cyacom and Netherlands-based Manpower Business Solutions. The Netherlands, whose annual turnover is in the hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars. Ozolins stated that ethical concerns about confidentiality and the quality and reliability of telephone communications have meant that most interpreting occurs using fixed-line connections rather than via mobile connection. Some study results point to significant differences between the way speech acts are delivered on the basis of differences between telephone-facilitated communication and face-to-face communication (e.g., Oviatt & Cohen, 1992; Wadensjö, 1999). Rosenberg (2007) argued that such differences are relatively minor compared to the discontinuity that can occur when a telephone is passed between interlocutors who cannot hear the interpreter interpreting into both languages. He and Kelly (2008) suggested that the nature of telephone interpreting requires the development of specific protocols on training and performance. This implies that testing of interpreting should include knowledge of remote communication protocols and a demonstration of telephone interpreting performance.

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2.2. Video-Link Interpreting

A number of studies have examined the use of video-link interpreting. These studies have usually adopted one of two different perspectives: (a) that of users of new technology and the features that new technology can offer in interlingual exchanges, or (b) that of interpreters who use such technology and their reception and experiences of using it. Some studies from either perspective have provided information on others' (i.e., non-interpreters') experience of using video-link and remote interpreting technology; this will be discussed where relevant.

Although many studies use the terms *video-link* and *remote* interchangeably, Braun and Taylor (2011) distinguished between the two, defining video-link or "videoconference interpreting (VCI)" as interpreting that takes place for participants at two different locations, such as a court and a prison. Braun et al. (2011) defined remote interpreting as interpreting in which speakers of different languages are located in the same place and are connected via video to the interpreter located elsewhere. Other studies do not make this distinction. In the current study, *video link* is a hypernym that refers to any use of a video link as the means for interpreting to occur; *remote* is a hypernym that refers to both telephone and video-link interpreting.

A pilot study to elicit interpreters' experiences in the then-emerging area of video-link interpreting was prepared by the Working Party on New Technologies of the Interpretation Directorate (2002). Questionnaire responses from 33 E.U.-employed interpreters showed, perhaps unsurprisingly, a high level of skepticism and resistance to video-link interpreting; on average, informants gave negative responses. The strongest negative reactions related to a lack of feeling that interpreters were participants in the interaction, and low motivation and fatigue. Other negative reactions related to unsatisfactory ergonomics and a self-perception of lack of quality of performance.

A relatively small number of studies have also engaged in a technical evaluation of the equipment's usability (e.g., Paras, Leyva, Berthold, & Otake, 2002). Advocates and those seeking to cut the cost of face-to-face interpretation commonly argue that video-link technology presents itself to be an almost identical replacement for face-to-face interpretation by providing not only the auditory but also the visual presence of the interpreter.

Moser-Mercer (2003) undertook a large-scale study for the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) entitled "Remote Interpreting and an Assessment of Human Factors and Performance Parameters." Among the "human factors" are "job design, task analysis and mental workload"; performance parameters are "logistics and technical components, e.g., equipment and installation, connections and video coverage." In additional research, Moser-Mercer (2005) identified accelerated fatigue and a general feeling of "disengagement" among interpreters who were not provided with views of speakers or their situations.

Recognizing that video-conferencing with accompanying (simultaneous) interpreting services is now a frequent and even standard feature of many business, administrative, and diplomatic interactions, the AIIC sought to provide recommendations for its use. From its members, the AIIC received submissions that reported the following:

The message is stripped of its non-verbal content; the other participants' verbal and non-verbal reactions to the speaker and among themselves are not perceived; the screens glitter; there is no way of assessing how the interpreted message has been received; there is a sense of alienation; there is not daylight. (AIIC, 2000)

Video-link interpreting is now regularly used in prison and remand situations (see Section 2.2.2, below). In one of the few studies to address not only interpreters' but also others' (e.g., court clerks, defense advocates, prisoners) experiences, Fowler (2007) reported serious problems in acoustic and visual access to source speakers, leading to constant requests for repetition and instances of miscommunication. She cautioned against interpreters accepting such assignments unless they are confident that sound and visual access of a reliable standard can be provided. Fowler also recorded similar serious concerns from other parties involved.

Mouzourakis (2006) elicited qualitative responses from a large number of conference interpreters who were new to video-conferencing: His results were mixed; the only widely held view among informants was a feeling of "alienation" or removal from source speakers. Winteringham (2010), in her comparison of many studies, acknowledged these as widespread complaints among interpreter practitioners, but pointed to the inevitability of new technology and the need to adapt it to interpreters' needs, rather than vice versa. Donovan (2006) drew a

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parallel between the practitioners' initial mistrust of the development of simultaneous interpreting through interpreting booths and the recent development of remote interpreting. Berber (2009) also recognized this but stated frankly that practitioners' inability or reluctance to use information and communications technology (ICT) will be to their disadvantage.

To summarize, researchers have identified the following prerequisites for interpreters' optimal performance in telephone and video-link interpreting that distinguish remote from on-site interpreting: knowledge of minimum technical requirements; proficiency in protocols with technical staff and other participants in an interpreting interaction; awareness of seating and optimizing visual and audio input and output; knowledge of protocols to manage interactions where there is no visual input or output; and ability to troubleshoot and manage stress. These notable differences justify the need for specific training for interpreting via telephone and video link.

2.2.1 Video-Link Technology in Health Care Interpreting

Many studies focusing on telephone interpreting have examined health care interpreting as the field that is most highly represented within telephone interpreting. Fewer studies have examined video-link interpreting in this field. In one study that did, Jones, Gill, Harrison, Meakin, and Wallace (2003) focused on patient satisfaction and enablement and length of stay in hospital, with little reported difference in satisfaction levels according to type of interpreting services. Elsewhere, studies of the satisfaction levels of interpreters who regularly use video link-ups have been less positive: Azarmina and Wallace (2005) reported that interpreters prefer face-to-face interpreting to video-link interpreting, but prefer the latter to telephone interpreting. A relatively small number of studies also engaged in a technical evaluation of the equipment's usability, such as Paras et al. (2002), whereas Fagan, Diaz, Reinert, Scimanna, and Fagan (2003) focused only on the "extra time" that telephone interpreting requires of participants, as opposed to hospital- or patient-supplied interpreters. Although health care interpreting is now commonly performed via telephone, it is less often performed through video-link means, largely due to the initial costs associated with installation of new facilities. A study on the use of video-link interpreting in four Belgian hospitals identified the need for both health care interpreters and health care workers to be trained in using video-link technology, which was a further cost factor largely unforeseen before the trial phase commenced (Verrept, 2011). In contrast, video-link technology is used more widely as a means for interpretation in courts.

2.2.2 Video-Link Technology in Court Interpreting

As stated above, an initial study by Fowler (2007) on the use of video-link interpreting facilities in courts reported problems with visual access and quality of acoustic transfer. The expansion of video-link interpreting in Europe and in European courtrooms over the last decade precipitated interest in this medium and led to E.U. funding for the Assessment of Videoconference Reporting in the Criminal Justice Service (AVIDICUS) project, led by Sabine Braun, which aimed to evaluate the quality of video-mediated interpreting in criminal proceedings and its viability from an interpreting point of view. A number of research papers associated with the project have been published (Braun, 2006, 2007). The project sought to locate optimal logistic and technical attributes to provide practitioners, users, and technical staff with guidelines. In regard to signed language interpreting, Napier (2011) provided a comparative study on different types of scenarios of video-link interpreting linked to courtrooms where the interpreter is a signed language interpreter and the attribute of visibility to the deaf participant is vital. Napier qualitatively compared each scenario and listed features that positively or negatively influence communication to the signed language interpreter and interpretation to the deaf person according to their positions among other participants or separated from them.

The AVIDICUS project also developed modules for delivery to trainee interpreters, practicing legal interpreters, and legal practitioners. These modules were developed in direct response to the research findings of the project that located the need for preparation, instruction, and supervised practice with new technology among

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not only the interpreters but also others with whom they worked. Braun et al. (2011) also reported that clear majorities of both trainee as well as practicing interpreters strongly supported training specific to these means of interpreting. The implication of such a finding is that these should be strongly considered as a component of pretest training or of the interpreter test itself.

Another comprehensive study (Carlson, 2011) on remote interpreting services in the courtroom was undertaken for language interpreting services used in Minnesota courts. Carlson investigated the incidence of and feedback on the following: conference or speaker phone facilities via telephone; digital audio platforms (a slightly more advanced version of speakerphone with better audio and volume enhancement); specialized telephonic equipment (offering both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation) through built-in microphone and headset systems or through mobile carts/consoles that can be moved from courtroom to courtroom; videoconferencing and webcams (including interactive teleconferencing or ITV); and voice-over Internet protocol (VoIP). Carlson found that, from a statistical perspective, across a large number of U.S. states, (audio-only) speakerphone is the most common form of remote interpreting, followed by interactive teleconferencing, whereas enhanced audio equipment and web cameras are used less (Carlson, 2011).

Carlson (2011) elicited responses from both courtroom staff and remote court interpreters. Courtroom staff members reported greatest ease of use with interactive teleconferencing, followed by enhanced audio, which was perceived to be easier than speakerphone (Carlson, 2011). Interpreters reported very low levels of satisfaction with both speakerphone and enhanced audio. In particular, interpreters complained of the lack of visual cues, other “inherent” difficulties, and the unreliability of advanced technology as reasons for their dissatisfaction (Carlson, 2011). However, as Carlson observed, enhanced audio equipment (sometimes known as the BIAMP audio flex product) is being installed in many courtrooms across many U.S. states. In general, Carlson advised against using remote interpreting in courtroom situations where it can be avoided and in support of restricting its use to short hearings where its use is unavoidable. Further, she recommended that remote interpreting should include visual coverage of proceedings for interpreters and not audio only. She identified training for all participants and maintenance checks of equipment as key attributes for the efficient use of interpreting services.

3. Recent Technological Innovations and Interpreter Pedagogy: Online and Video-Link Training and Testing

Chen and Ko (2010; Ko & Chen, 2011) reported on trialling online tests with interpreter trainees at the end of a period of online study. Their studies, based on the same data sample of online tests of dialogue interpreting, sight translation, consecutive interpreting, and ethical questions, documented the online delivery of all parts of the NAATI professional interpreter exam. The technical specifications of the testing circumstances were specific to the training that preceded testing. A Web-based Collaborative Cyber Community (3C) was used for testing purposes. The 3C learning platform was developed at the National Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan, and its server “has the capacity to support up to 500 online asynchronous users and 200 online synchronous users simultaneously” (Chen & Ko, 2010, p. 155).

Chen and Ko used the synchronous cyber classroom component of 3C with its face-to-face visual feature, including audio and video windows, a control panel, text chat box, a whiteboard, and subvideo windows (of which up to 18 can be shown simultaneously). “All participants in the synchronous cyber classroom can hear and see one another. Instant text communication and audio and video recording of all activities are also possible” (Chen & Ko, 2010, p. 155).

A full description of all technical and logistic details associated with Chen & Ko’s (2010) test sample goes beyond the bounds of this article. However, key attributes of the test sample can be summarized here. First, test candidates used their own computers and entered “booths” that had been specified to them according to the organization of the cyber classroom. Test components, such as the dialogue-interpreting component, were provided by the examiner to the test candidates, who then opened it electronically; the test candidates accessed

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and managed the dialogue themselves and were able to elect when to start recording. Candidates were relatively independent; they were able to work at their own speed, repeat segments when needed, and signal through text message to the examiner when they had finished. The examiner could randomly visit candidates' booths to hear their performance. All candidates' interpreting output, both audio and video, was recorded. For sight translation, the source text was provided on whiteboard. Candidates were not able to mark it (electronically) in any way and had to make notes on a separate piece of paper. Their sight translations were recorded in the same way by the candidates, controlling the start of their interpreted rendition.

The consecutive interpreting component was centrally controlled by the examiner, who provided the source speech, and no repeats were permitted from the candidates. Ethical questions were similar to the dialogue-interpreting component, with candidates listening to the questions and able to provide multiple responses (e.g., further elaboration or repetition) while controlling the recording function.

Overall, the technology used in Chen & Ko's (2010) test was able to accomplish the requirements of the NAATI spoken interpreting test (i.e., dialogue and speech interpreting, sight translation, knowledge of ethics) in regard to test delivery and recording of candidate performance for all components of the test. Other features of the testing situation were noted, such as the difficulty of monitoring each candidate's actions throughout the test and ensuring that candidates were not accessing online dictionaries or receiving assistance from other sources. Candidates themselves reported that good familiarity with the technical equipment was important not only to ensure required recording procedures but also to allay nervousness that can occur when technical problems arise. Chen and Ko (2010; Ko & Chen, 2011) advocated further development and trialling of online testing and said they were likely to continue in this direction themselves. The implication of their study is that video-link testing through computers is a realistic development that should be considered very strongly as part of efforts to allow the use of computers for translation testing.

4. Practitioners' and Examiners' Use of and Attitudes Toward Telephone and Video-Link Interpreting: Survey Results

To further investigate practitioners' and examiners' relationships with telephone and video-link interpreting, I conducted a survey. I recruited participants by contacting approximately 40 practitioners and examiners who were at the time or had previously been associated with the Translation and Interpreting programs at Monash University or RMIT University and supplied with an explanatory statement of the research's intentions. Approval to survey potential informants for this research was granted by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. Concurrent approval from other participating institutions in the working party for the development of a conceptual overview of a new model for NAATI standards, testing, and assessment was also granted.

Fifteen interpreter practitioners and 11 examiners responded. The sample is too small to be considered representative of the experiences and attitudes of the large number of over 5,000 interpreter practitioners, but it does have some measure of representativity of the smaller group of approximately 150 examiners in Australia. The responses gained from the surveys provide only a small range of possible experiences and attitudes. However, research studies in Interpreting Studies are often based on small sample sizes of 20 or fewer informants (e.g., Moser-Mercer, 2003; Mouzourakis, 2006; Hale, 2007), and the authors of these studies recognize limitations to their representativity.

Below I present a selection of both quantitative (percentage responses) and qualitative (comments and examples from informants) data from the surveys where relevant. Numbers in parentheses after comments refer to the number of informants who provided similar comments.

4.1. Survey Results From Interpreter Practitioners

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The survey for interpreter practitioners contained eight questions constructed to capture informants' responses in regard to technology used for on-site interpreting and experience in telephone or video-link interpreting. Further, attitudinal responses were sought in regard to components of the current interpreting test and the role of technology.

Q1. Do you have experience in telephone or video-link interpreting?

| Yes. Telephone only | Yes. Both telephone and video-link | No |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|----|
| 13 | 27 | 60 |

Comments on the use of telephone interpreting:

- *Mostly medical interpreting.*

Comments on the use of video-link interpreting:

- *Migrant Review Tribunal, school enrollments. Auslan interpreting, hospitals, Legal Aid.*
- *Mental health consultations (psychiatrist and patient both in remote region, interpreter in city location).*
- *Legal interpreting (in court: defendant in remote region, linked to court in city.)*

Q2. Do you use electronic devices when working as an interpreter (e.g., use a laptop in court to access online legal dictionaries)? If yes, please give details.

| Yes | No | No response |
|-----|----|-------------|
| 27 | 67 | 6 |

Comments:

- *Yes. For telephone interpreting I use online dictionaries.*
- *I do bring my laptop, iPhone (with Internet access) and electronic dictionary with me just in case I need to look something up. However, on the job, I have never had the time to use them.*

Q3. Do you think that in your work as an interpreter there are areas in which technology could be used, in the future?

| Yes | No; only telephone interpreting | No |
|-----|---------------------------------|----|
| 80 | 7 | 13 |

Comments:

- *Certainly with video-link technology. (2)*
- *Laptops and electronic dictionaries (2)*
- *Video relay services for deaf people so that they can access information. (2)*

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- *Clients might be concerned that there are other parties that could somehow gain access to a video link of an interpreted situation.*
- *I think Skype and other video-link and remote interpreting would be a possible mode of interpreting that could become more popular as it would decrease the cost of hiring an interpreter. However, at least in business situations, I also find that many clients want the physical presence of the interpreter with them as reassurance.*
- *I think it is inevitable. Already jobs are offered and accepted/declined by SMS by most agencies and interpreters. On-site use of technology (such as laptops and online dictionaries) in the community domain is seen as unprofessional at the moment as it slows down communication and reveals apparent lack of interpreter competence.*

Q4. Do you believe that certification testing should include demonstrated interpreting performance using a telephone and/or through a video-link?

| Yes. Telephone only | Yes. Both telephone and video-link | No | No answer |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|----|-----------|
| 39 | 27 | 27 | 7 |

Comments:

- *Yes. Telephone interpreting is already popular amongst some healthcare providers.*
- *Yes. In remote areas of Australia, the need for telephone interpreters is great and we need to have skilled interpreters doing this.*
- *No. On-site interpreting is still the most popular type of interpreting and the one that most prefer.*

Q5. Do you see the idea of certification testing only through remote means (e.g., video link) as a good idea or not?

| Yes | Maybe | No | No answer |
|-----|-------|----|-----------|
| 20 | 27 | 47 | 6 |

Comments:

- *Maybe. Remote interpreting is okay for practice but not for testing. (2)*
- *No. There are security problems, like cheating and identity fraud.*

Q6 (i) What are the good points / advantages / logistic requirements?

Comments:

- *No travel costs. (6)*
- *Greater access for candidates. (5)*
- *Software requirements, test instruments, hardware required.*
- *I can't see any good point or advantage in being assessed remotely. I do believe that face-to-face assessments are fairer. When an assessor has the candidate in front of him/her, [he/she] can tell more about the personality of the candidate, which should be something to be assessed if you consider the candidate as a potential professional.*
- *Potential for live testing using same participants/actors from one location, reducing variation that might occur in live testing scenarios acted out by different participants in different locations.*
- *Provide realistic environment as remote interpreting will be common in the future.*

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Q6 (ii) What are the bad points/disadvantages/logistical difficulties?

Comments:

- *Quality of transmission. (3)*
- *Where the candidate is visible, this may lead to a conflict of interest if the candidate is well known to the examiner. (2)*
- *Could take longer.*
- *Would require training for testees and others.*
- *No physical presence (so important in interpreting). Hard to evaluate a few candidates one after the other. It would take longer. Cannot discuss afterwards with the other examiners.*
- *The authenticity of the situation is questionable (while it is a step up from the current test using audio recordings).*
- *Broadband speed/technological issues; visibility of signers' hands and facial expression; angle of camera/size of screen/seating; capacity to connect with the discourse environment and to manage aspects of the discourse if and when required (e.g., turn taking) if located remotely.*

As stated, this sample of interpreter practitioners (15) is small, and the responses presented above are indicative of a randomly elicited group.

In general, 60% of the practitioner informants had had no contact with telephone or video-link interpreting. The remaining 40% had experience in telephone interpreting, most of them also with video-link interpreting. Apart from one informant who reported using online dictionaries when telephone interpreting, none of the informants reported any other uses of contemporary technology in the performance of interpreting. Laptops and hand-held devices were used for preparation and to liaison with clients/agencies but not for verbal or signed interlingual transfer. Responses to Question 3 reveal that 80% of informants believed that in the future, there will be further technological innovations that will be used in interpreting interactions. For most of those who believed this, their belief related largely to the use of video-link technology, with which a majority of informants had not yet had contact. In other words, informants saw the means through which communication between participants in an interpreting interaction takes place as amenable to technological change, but not the activity of interlingual transfer as such. There was some skepticism that technological innovations will be able to do much more than prepare practitioners for assignments and as an aid for some forms of telephone interpreting where recourse to online sources is considered logistically possible.

These responses are in line with Ozolins' (2011) description of the relatively high, but not universal, popularity of telephone interpreting, and their comments are congruent with Rosenberg's (2007) assertion that telephone interpreting is employed most in the health care sector. Practitioner informants' comments above are also in line with Fowler's (2007) and Carlson's (2011) studies, which located the legal sector as the most prominent sector in which interpreters use video-link technology. Less expected is the finding that 27% of practitioner informants reported using electronic devices *when working* as an interpreter, for example, online dictionary use for telephone interpreting and electronic glossaries via laptop. This contrasts with Donovan's (2006) and Winteringham's (2010) findings that indicated that the immediate nature of interpreting and its logistical features render recourse to electronic resources unworkable.

Over half of the informants believed that telephone interpreting should be a component of testing, whereas only 20% believed that video-link interpreting need also be a testing component. Practitioners were less certain about the prospect of video-link as the only means through which the test is conducted: only 20% believed that this would be a good idea, whereas nearly half were against and the remainder expressed mixed feelings or did not respond. Advantages of remote testing nominated by informants include predictable ones: lower travel costs, greater access to candidates in remote areas. One informant suggested that remote interpreting will be commonplace and therefore testing should itself reflect this practice. Some disadvantages of remote testing listed are also familiar: uneven transmission quality, the lack of set requirements to train examiners, and the need for pretest training for candidates. Others also mentioned the difficulty that candidates could have in connecting to the

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(test) discourse environment and that physical presence is required in most interpreting interactions, which are on-site.

Overall, although a majority of practitioners did not report experience with telephone or video-link interpreting, there was a widespread consensus that these means of interpretation will become more common and widespread. In general, responses to the idea of video-link testing were mixed—although many informants could see merit in it through a widening of access to testing for previously disenfranchised groups, others had concerns about the quality and feasibility of video-link testing as a fair and reliable means of testing. These responses are line with Verrept's (2011) recommendations about the logistical and technological requirements and preparation needed for video-link testing to work successfully. Interpreter practitioners indicated that if video-link testing is to be considered, it should be as a test that would require pretest training, to familiarize the test candidate not only with the technical equipment that he or she would use in the test, but also with the altered discourse and personal protocols that remote communication bears in comparison to face-to-face testing.

4.2. Survey Results From Interpreter Examiners

The survey for interpreter examiners also contained eight questions. Eleven examiners filled out this survey. The questions were constructed to capture informants' responses in regard to current test-development protocols and the use of technology in test development, general experience in using telephone or video-link interpreting, and opinions on the use of technology and the possibility of remote testing. In addition, attitudinal responses were sought in regard to components of the current interpreting test and the role of technology.

Q1. Do you use technology in the construction of the test? For example, are source speeches (oral or signed) and any other texts recorded?

| Yes | No | No answer / Not applicable |
|-----|----|----------------------------|
| 46 | 18 | 36 |

Responses:

- *Yes. Video recorded signed and spoken texts are pre-recorded.*
- *Yes. We use a video lab if filming the test here - otherwise we divide the test creation up among the panel - some members develop the test, others film it, etc.*

Q2. Do you record all or parts of the examination?

| Yes. Audio only | Yes. Video and audio | No | No answer |
|-----------------|----------------------|----|-----------|
| 36 | 46 | 9 | 9 |

- *The current testing situation means that many nonverbal clues surrounding the interpreter performance are lost in the audio-only situation. Improved use of technology would give candidates a better opportunity to showcase not just their linguistic capabilities but also things such as demeanor and interpersonal skills necessary in establishing real-life dynamics.*

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Q3. Do you have experience in telephone interpreting and/or video-link interpreting?

| | Yes. As a practitioner | Yes. Informally, not professionally | No |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Telephone | 55 | 9 | 36 |
| Video-link | 27 | 27 | 46 |

Q4. If yes to either above, was your experience of telephone and/or video-link interpreting positive or negative?

| Positive | Neutral | Negative | No answer |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 27 | 27 | 27 | 19 |

Responses:

- *Positive. I have had several good experiences where the technology was perfect and enabled a very satisfactory exchange.*
- *Neutral. There are specifications regarding bandwidth, etc., and how to set up things to ensure minimum impact on the candidate. They should not be responsible for the technology so they can concentrate on the content of the test.*
- *Negative. There are many potential technical issues and the exam conditions already put enough pressure on candidates. If there are technical glitches it will be even more stressful for them. Plus for Auslan, remote testing would require high bandwidths for video content—if not high enough the transmission slows down and makes the signing impossible to follow.*
- *Negative. Poor quality link-up which caused frustration and ultimately the cancellation of the interview. Generally, it can be more stressful than face-to-face interviews.*

Q5. Do you believe that certification testing should include demonstrated interpreting performance using a telephone and/or through a video-link?

| Yes. Telephone only | Yes. Both telephone and video-link | No |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|
| 36 | 45 | 19 |

Comments:

- *Yes. The popularity of telephone interpreting is likely to rise further in the coming years. We need to have tests that cover this as well.*
- *Yes. Video-link interpreting is important with the establishment of the new broadband network.*

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- *No. The tests as they are structured now are able to test the candidates for all aspects of interpreting, including telephone interpreting.*

Q6. Do you believe that certification testing could be performed solely through a video-link?

| Yes | Maybe | No | No answer |
|-----|-------|----|-----------|
| 18 | 27 | 46 | 9 |

Q7. Which protocols and logistic requirements would be required for a test candidate to undertake an accreditation test remotely?

Responses:

- *Good video conferencing facilities. (3)*
- *Training made available to the test taker so that they are fully familiar with the test situation. (3)*
- *Better broadband/more reliable links across Australia; greater awareness of specific requirements for testing a visual language modality (screen size, seating, camera angles etc); etc.*
- *Certify their identity.*

This sample of interpreter examiners (11) is small, and the responses presented above are indicative of a randomly elicited group only. The responses show that although many examiners had so far not had the chance to design a test, those that had followed NAATI protocols had used audio-recording technology for spoken languages and video-recording for Auslan (sign) interpreting, which mirror the conventions for recording test candidates' performance in spoken languages and Auslan. Over half of the informants had experience with video-recording interpreter testees' performance. In addition, over half of the examiners had experience using both telephone and video-link interpreting. Just over half of the informants had had personal experience using video-link technology; opinions expressed toward it were equally positive, neutral, and negative. Neutral and negative responses cautioned against video-link technology as a communication means for testing. These responses listed unfamiliar technology as a possible distraction for test candidates, stress and lower performance in the event of technical problems, and doubts that variable bandwidth could ensure good video reception for both candidate and examiner. These concerns with the technical reliability of video-link technology are similar to those reported by Mouzourakis's (2006) and Fowler's (2007) informants.

In regard to tests containing telephone and video-link interpreting as components of the test, over 80% believed that telephone interpreting should be a component, whereas nearly half favored video-link interpreting as well. For interpreter testing to be offered remotely, as the sole means of testing, informants noted the importance of user-friendly facilities, high bandwidth, and the chance for test candidates to familiarize themselves with the video-link technology and the altered dynamics that this technology requires, in turn-taking signals, seating, and camera angles.

These examiners were more likely than was the sample of practitioners to have engaged in video-link interpreting. Examiners share with practitioners the belief that these technologically enabled means of interpreting are likely to become more frequent and that testing through these means is possible. Chen and Ko's (2010; Ko & Chen, 2011) descriptions of their own initial attempts to test candidates sitting for interpreter examinations through remote means were, indeed, studies of an innovative and pioneering experiment. Nearly half of the interpreter examiners surveyed also believed that testing through remote means is possible and workable. At the same time, responses also indicated that examiners believed that for remote testing to happen, reliable

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infrastructure must first be in place and test candidates must be trained in using the technology before they attempt the test.

5. Conclusion: Recommendations for Interpreter Training

Telephone interpreting is now a commonplace and increasingly frequent means of communication for interpreted interactions. Telephone interpreting requires particular protocols, relies on different oral/aural input and output from the interpreter in the absence of visual information, requires extra checks from all participants in terms of confidentiality, and has different interpersonal and stress management dynamics to manage both source speech (for spoken languages and for situations in which a sign language interpreter is situated with a sign language user, communicating with a spoken language user via telephone) and technical features.

The main features that sufficiently distinguish telephone interpreting from on-site interpreting for the former to justify distinct aspects of training and testing include the following:

- Role relationship protocols (e.g., introduction, questions on prior experience in working with interpreters, explanation of interpreter's role, terms of address, directions on length of turn, etc.) can be established in verbal form only (for spoken languages).
- Confidentiality and privacy protocols must be overtly conveyed where visual information on others present or within earshot is lacking.
- Identity and role establishment in multiparty interactions.
- Higher frequency of interlocutors using third person as the other interlocutor remains unseen.
- Higher number of permissible requests for clarification and repetition due to clarity of telephone connection and/or interlocutors' use of telephone equipment.
- Strategies to deal with overlapping speech.

In addition, although advances in remote communication continue to occur, the research studies in interpreting and translation discussed above in Section 2 and the responses from both translation and interpreting practitioners and examiners suggest that video-link interpreting is currently infrequently used. However, video-link and other remote forms of asynchronous communication are likely to become more frequent in the near future, as reported by most informants. (The establishment of high-speed broadband in many countries is likely to accelerate the popularity of video-link interpreting if interpreters are able to perform from their homes, using appropriate software.) Interpreter protocols suggested above for telephone interpreting also apply to the situation of video-link interpreting. However, in regard to video-link interpreting, there are features of the situation that trainee interpreters must consider before interpreting commences. The following are pre-interaction protocols that interpreters should establish:

- Technical controls available to participants to regulate their appearance and reception, for example, volume production and reception, zoom functions for visual reception of other participant, seating and microphone protocols, establishment of protocols in the event of technical problems.
- Camera coverage of candidate's location with regard to the presence of others in their near proximity.
- Identity verification and explanation of how the interpreted interaction will be conducted.
- Quality of audio and video reception between all interlocutors.
- Extraneous influences such as the millisecond delays between receipt of picture and receipt of the accompanying sound and negotiation protocols to avoid "speaking over" the person whose voice continues to be heard for a millisecond or so after speaking has finished from the video image. Echo can also be a feature of some video-link interactions.

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The above pre-interaction attributes and interactional protocols are identified on the basis of the findings of research studies and as logistical and interactional features that are recommended for interpreter training and testing. Interpreter training programs are only now addressing these needs and exploring technological capabilities for remote interpreting, whereas remote interpreter testing has so far been implemented by agencies that themselves specialize in remote interpreting, (e.g., Language Line, CyraCom). The increased popularity and frequency of remote communication, the speed and availability of broadband Internet, and increasing familiarity with audiovisual technology are likely to accelerate provision and demand for remote interpreting. Those training and testing entities that wish to claim that their standards are reflective and representative of interpreting practice are urged to consider inclusion of remote interpreting as a performance component of their benchmark standards.

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Autopoiesis: Scaffolding the Reflective Practitioner Toward Employability

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Abstract

Sign language interpreters confront a diversity of complex situations in their everyday work. To be able to consider and appropriately respond to such situations, interpreters need robust cognitive reflective frameworks to support them. Since 1993, the University of Wolverhampton's BA (honors) Interpreting British Sign Language/English course has delivered undergraduate training to aspiring sign language interpreters. The end product has been high levels of "appropriate" graduate employability success, in part due to the strong correlation between what employers regard as essential and desirable in an employee, and the attributes demonstrated by the reflective practitioners created by the program. In this article, the author looks at a range of perspectives in relation to reflective learning, discusses its application in interpreter training, and argues that reflection is one of the essential skills required for effective practice. In order to achieve this skill, however, interpreter educators must establish robust scaffolding frameworks during training. The author provides examples of methods used to build these cognitive frameworks during placement learning modules. It is in part the building of interpreting students' cognitive reflective framework during training that will provide them with the necessary key tools for professional practice and lifelong learning.

Key Words: scaffolding, reflective learning, reflective practice, work placement, employability, supervision, interpreter training, modelling, social directed learning, individual directed learning, lifelong learning, sign language interpreting

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Autopoiesis: Scaffolding the Reflective Practitioner Toward Employability

1. Introduction

In the early 1970s, Varela, Maturana, and Uribe (1974) coined the term *autopoiesis* to describe a system that is able to autoproduct, derived from the Greek word *poiesis*, meaning “production.” Although the term was initially applied to the academic discipline of biology, to describe organisms that are able to maintain themselves by reproducing what they need from within their own entity, I saw parallels to the interpreter training process. In this article, I explore how interpreter trainers could obtain the same autopoietic results from interpreter trainees, by focusing on the understanding and development of reflective practice. I demonstrate that the undertaking of reflective practice, during training and placement learning, is paramount in establishing reflection as a key part of an interpreter’s skill set that enhances employability. The creation of a reflective professional who is able, through a structured scaffolded training approach, to adapt to, cope with, and learn from new situations will be in a position to support his or her own future growth and become an autopoietic interpreting practitioner.

1.1. Developing Employability

Yorke stated that employers are mainly interested in the answer to the following question: “What can the emerging students actually do?” (1999, p. 17). This is highlighted by the Higher Education Academy’s student employability profiles created by employers, who cite six main employability criteria that “can transform organisations and add value early in their careers” (HEA, 2006, p. 140): cognitive skills/brainpower, generic competencies/personal capabilities, technical ability, business and/or organization awareness, and practical elements such as vocational courses. From the descriptions and explanations of these six employability criteria, one can draw at least 15 employability skills that could be seen as containing reflective components (Bown & Dekesel, 2009, 2010, 2011): the ability to participate in and review quality control processes; to reflect and review one’s own practice; to critically evaluate professional practice outcomes; to understand basic financial and commercial principles; to appreciate organizational cultures; to demonstrate learning through work experience; to adapt to new technologies; to be aware of emotional intelligence and performance; to express a desire to learn for oneself; to take into account interpersonal sensitivity; to communicate and persuade; to work with others in a team; to assess risk and draw conclusions; to work with information and handle a mass of diverse data; and to identify, analyze, and solve problems. Although employers were not specifically thinking of interpreters when commenting on what makes a graduate employable, the above list of skills could apply to the interpreting profession. The interpreting graduate “product” who enters the marketplace should therefore, be able to demonstrate a range of skills and attributes that ensures that not only does the interpreter meet the national occupational and registration standards, but also is “desirable” to the community, with the potential of being “immediately employable” Fanthome (2004, p. 5). Although employers would ideally prioritize the contracting of

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reflective practitioners (Bown & Dekesel, 2010; Pegg, Waldo, Hendy-Isaac & Lawton, 2012), the reality is that in geographical regions, where there is still a shortage of interpreters, this may not be feasible.

During the holistic development of a student interpreter, seven main stakeholder groups come to bear, each with particular expectations. The first group is the deaf or minority-language community, who will be seeking a multiskilled individual with an attitude and ethos appropriate to the settings and interlocutors they will engage with. The second group is the hearing or majority-language communities, whose needs tend to differ from the first group. The third group is the employers; whether the graduate becomes an employee or self-employed, both domains require effective demonstration of specific skills for remuneration. The fourth group is the individuals or team who teach the “trainee,” whose influence will encompass not only all stakeholders’ views and professional standards, but also the trainers’ personal philosophies and approaches to training. The fifth group is the students themselves, whose primary goal will be to graduate with the right qualification for professional accreditation so as to secure successful employment. The sixth group is the professional organizations of interpreters (e.g., the Association of Sign Language Interpreters [ASLI] and the Visual Language Professionals [VLP]), who help shape the future of the profession. The final and seventh group is the relevant professional registration bodies (e.g., the National Registers for Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People [NRCPD]), who regulate the profession and safeguard, in particular, the first and second groups of stakeholders.

A range of authors list the skill sets required of a professional interpreter (for an overview, see Bontempo & Napier, 2007). Among the many capabilities an interpreter needs in order to function effectively and carry out duties and responsibilities is reflective thinking. Harvey (2003, p. 3) considers this a key capability of employability: “The emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner.”

2. The Case for Reflection

Reflective thinking is already considered a key component of interpreter training; “the literature clearly supports the idea that [a] competent professional . . . should engage in . . . critically reflective practice” (Williams, 2001, p. 33). Reflective learning is seen as an “important educational tool” (Taylor, 2003, p. 244) that has been “internationally accepted” (Collin & Karsenti, 2011, p. 570) and is therefore widely used in higher education training (Kahn, 2006; Kahn et al. 2008). However, Kreber (2004) and Moon (2000), argue that reflective learning is often “poorly conceptualized,” which is supported by Fendler (2003, p. 20), who describes it as a cocktail of “mixed messages and confusing agendas,” and, as such, its definition, method of development, and assessment can be matters for debate.

Although many explanations of reflective thinking offer descriptions Dewey (1933) gives a trustworthy and succinct definition. He argues that it is “a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty in which thinking originates,” which should result in “an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity” (p. 12). This is a particular challenge for beginners who, without a specific inquiry framework and skilful professional guidance, will have difficulty rising above the perplexity that Dewey identifies.

In 2006, Peter Kahn conducted an extensive review of reflective learning across 69 training programs in a variety of disciplines and summed up reflection as “the extended consideration of problematic aspects of knowledge or practice . . . used to help an individual understand their professional practice or to gain insights into their progress against a set of personal goals” (p. 1). Owen, & Stupans (2009, p. 272) find reflection to be “a cognitive process for organizing ideas and building theory from observations and experiences,” and Thorpe (2000, p. 80) refers to it as a means of “achieving transformative learning,” which is echoed in Kahn et al.’s (2008) review of course designers, who found it to be formative and supportive in “self improvement and adaptation of practice” (p. 168).

Schön (1987), in raising the question of why professionals should undertake reflective thinking, maintains that an essential component of professional practice is one’s capability to decisively reflect when faced with new,

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intricate, and diverse situations. This carries across training in a range of people-centered disciplines such as social work, education, and health, whose practitioners see reflective practice as a central component of their profession, alongside domain specific and technical skills (Crowe & O'Malley, 2006; Findlay, Dempsey & Warren-Forward, 2010; Hamilton & Druva, 2010; Jones, 1995; Kahn, et. al. 2008; Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2004; Lam, Wong & Leung, 2007; Loughran, 1996; Ruch, 2002, 2005, 2007; Tornøe, 2007; Valli, 1992). Instructors trying to determine if a particular skill should be included in training may be guided by this essential pedagogic principle: Is the skill a tool for critical thought in the linking of theory to practice (Bergson & Sperlinger, 2003; Kahn et al., 2008; Lam, Wong, & Leung, 2007; Owen & Stupans, 2009; Taylor, 2003; Thorpe, 2000)? Instructors can also look to the generally accepted view that students need to focus on ““problems of the type met in professional life”” (Ramsden, 2000, p. 81), as part of a “problem-based curriculum” (Newble & Clark, 1986, p. 268), which in turn helps them to review the consequences of their decisions (Mumford, 1987) and relate “fresh material to prior knowledge” (Burke, Jones, & Doherty, 2005, p. 133).

Additional principles for embarking on reflective thinking are autopoietic in nature, in that they aim to foster “self-improvement and adaptation of practice” (Taylor, 2003; Kahn et al., 2008). This leads to an expansion of one’s repertoire (Johns, 2000) and enhances the overall quality of an interpreter’s practice (McKee, 2008). This improvement in practice is in part made possible by a focus on the justification of actions, which aids the retrospective and predictive activity in which a practitioner will be involved (Jasper, 2003). Reflection allows for thinking time to understand decisions in practice (Thompson & Thompson 2008) and by the key activity of monitoring one’s own learning (Hamilton & Druva, 2010; Thorpe, 2000), helps to establish “the accountability of professional practice” (Fook, 1999, p. 207). Not only does this professional accountability create a professional identity, but one can argue that the continuous verification of our own actions against those of other practitioners also establishes a “self-identity” (Lam et al. 2007). Eraut and Lam highlight a range of other reasons why we should embark on reflective learning and thinking: Reflective thinking improves and prevents complacency (Eraut 1996); it harvests the impact of feedback on self-awareness (Eraut, 1996; Lam et al., 2007); and it improves awareness of the impact our actions have on other people (Lam et al. 2007). This latter reason of why we should embark upon reflective thinking within interpreter training is a key component of being a reflective practitioner, namely, the ability to be sensitive and responsive to clients’ needs (Taylor, 2003; Redmond, 2006). Although we can debate whether the listed benefits are direct results of reflective thinking or by-products, involvement in reflective thinking creates a responsible awareness of “safety in practice” within one’s capabilities and limitations (Jasper 2003). This “safety to practice” benchmark principle is relevant to all stakeholder groups identified above.

Schön’s (1983, 1987, 1995) work is a good starting point for examining the component parts of reflective activity. Schön identifies three types of reflection, which are distinguished by the points in time in which they can occur: *knowing-in-action*, in which professional practice demonstrates underlying knowledge—“the knowing is in the action” (Schön, 1987, p. 25); *reflection in action*, in which our ability to reflect can “reshape what we are doing while we are doing it” (Schön 1987, p. 26); and *reflection on action*, in which one uses knowledge-in-action to reflect upon past events. Cowan (1998) adds a fourth type of reflection, *reflection for action*,—which could also be called—*reflection pre-action* (Bown & Dekesel, 2011), in which one uses reflection to predict the outcomes of potential actions and select the most suitable option given the setting and participants.

It could be argued that most individuals will implicitly demonstrate a natural level of reflective ability; however, the extent to which this is sufficient for professional practice can be questioned. In order to reflect effectively, which Kolb (1984) identifies as a key learning process, learners or practitioners will have to go through a staged or phased process that encompasses reflection (Boyd & Fales, 1983; Brookfield, 1987; Dewey, 1910, 1933; Lam et al., 2007; Mezirow, 1990, 1998; Schön, 1987, 1995; Vachon & LeBlanc, 2011). The aim is to turn initial doubt or uncertainty, via self-knowledge and understanding, to a state of self-actualization, in which practitioners are able to “improve [their] own performance without being reliant on guidance from others” (Fanthome (2004, p. 5). Eraut (1996, p. 124) argues that the learner will therefore eventually move away from rules and guidelines, in order to develop an “intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding,” on the way toward achieving the educational advantage that Petty (1998) labels as “autonomous thought.”

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3. Scaffolding the Learner

The reality within vocational training is that theory alone does not develop a rounded practitioner. Interpreter trainees must understand that interpreting practitioners do not solely adhere to rule-based theoretical models; instead, they use “complex situational understanding” (Cope et al., 2000), which Berliner defines as the ability to “discern in complex environments what is important to attend to” (1988, p. 12). This understanding relies heavily on on-the-job experiences and is honed over time by the discovery that there is no single neat answer to the problems encountered in practice; practitioners develop arsenals of workable strategies to guide them. Trainees can benefit enormously from the experience of such a seasoned practitioner, a guide to take them on as an apprentice, facilitate their journey from theory to practice, and continually progress them beyond their present capabilities (Cope et al. 2000; Owen & Stupans, 2009; Verenikina, 2008;). This and other types of guides provide scaffolding for the learner. *Scaffolding* during the formative period helps to create the internal coping structures for managing stress within practice, guides the thinking process, allows for the selection of suitable responses, informs appropriate decisions, and contributes to the safe management of career longevity.

Cope et al. (2000) discusses the “cognitive apprenticeship” concept developed by Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1988), which describes the ideal relationship between the practitioner and trainee and highlights the central strategies that practitioner supervisors should employ in the guiding process. These include modelling, coaching, scaffolding, fading, articulation, reflection, and exploration. The practitioners should therefore be able to provide an in situ demonstration of their interpretation to the learner and give constructive feedback as to his/her attempts, accompanied by varying levels of support, in order to permit the learner to become independent.

Cope et al. argue that “it is these types of activity to which mentors might aspire when they are supervising and instructing students on placements” (2000, p.851). He sums up the key characteristic of scaffolding, namely, that practitioners should provide learners

with sufficient support to allow them to achieve more than they would be able to without help. As the competence of the learner increases, the support is withdrawn in such a way as to pass responsibility over to the learner. In this way, learners are able to move toward independent competence in areas where they initially needed help. (Cope et al., 2000, p. 854)

Reflection is one of the key components of scaffolding. Practitioners should create situations that allow learners opportunities to verbalize or write down their “reflective” thoughts, in which they compare their performance to that of other professionals, are able to consider alternatives, and justify their actions alongside considering the consequences of them. However, when reflective activity is to be demonstrated via written free-form journaling, the results can lead to streams of consciousness, without any real depth or shape to the review of the experiences, hence the process of reflection requires direction (Duffy, 2009; Kahn, 2006). Such direction can be provided by frameworks or templates, also known as exemplars, to guide reflective thinking and form one type of scaffold within the stages of reflection. These exemplars must, however, allow for flexibility of growth and take into account individual differences within the developmental process. Ultimately, where a tutored or directed reflective process exists to review professional practice, it provides the learner with a tool in the journey toward reflexive thought, “the mind’s conversation with itself” (Thorpe, 2000, p. 81). This dialogue, which is an essential part of learning and development (Walker, Crawford, & Parker, 2008), has the potential to “create an ongoing cycle of learning, critical thinking, and self-assessment that continues throughout their careers” Winston (2005, p. 231). This in turn provides a framework for reviewing safety in practice, continuing professional development, and lifelong learning.

4. Reflection as Scaffold Within the Interpreter Training Program

Reflective learning requires time to develop. Trainers must be aware of the learners’ abilities at each level within a training program (Hamilton, & Druva, 2010) and their demographics (e.g., age, life experiences,

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financial/personal circumstances, technology drivers), which impact upon their approaches to learning and their perceptions about the world around them. Reflective activities must be designed to support bridging the gap between field practice and simulated, in-class practice, and they must mirror the nature and complexity of the workplace (Cope, Cuthbertson, & Stoddart, 2000; Kahn et al., 2008). The teaching team's ongoing review of the method of implementation of the reflective learning strategy (Thorpe, 2000) ensures a collective understanding of the developments required for interpreter trainees to reach each attainment benchmark, and guarantees that appropriate innovations and adaptations are interwoven within the overall framework.

Reflective learning requires reflective dialogue. This dialogue takes place in class via peer and tutor feedback, remotely through online forums, and face to face via guided sessions with lecturers. It forms an essential part of the social nature of learning within vocational training, in which practitioners transfer their skills to the learners, and therefore adheres to Vygotsky's (1978) concept that learning occurs within a social context. Scaffolding is key to supporting the learner's progress (Cope et al., 2000; Kahn 2006, 2008; Owen & Stupans, 2009; Thorpe, 2000; Verenikina, 2008), and this is a vital component of the reflective dialogue process within interpreter training.

For nearly two decades I have been actively involved in the enhancement of employability of sign language interpreters, through the roles of a manager of interpreting agencies, a trainer of interpreters, an employer, and, since 1999, course leader of the British Sign Language/English interpreting undergraduate degree program (3- and 4-year courses) at the University of Wolverhampton. One of my responsibilities as course leader was the pedagogic design, establishment, and management of a work placement for third-year students. This placement provides an additional opportunity to close the gap between theoretical constructs and professional practice, and it is the culmination of a scaffolded journey towards becoming a reflective professional practitioner. Two placement modules were developed via a structured organic process. They were born out of field experience and systematically reviewed, revised, and adapted over the years. A central ethos in this process was the role of "reflection in practice." This was supported by ongoing research into the views of employers and students taking part in placement learning (Bown, 2007; Bown & Dekesel, 2009, 2010, 2011; Bown & Williams, 2007) and consequently highlighted one of the many transferrable features of the interpreting work placement model. The model itself has recently been identified as a case study for good practice in the final report on public service interpreter training by the Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (Graham, 2012).

At the University of Wolverhampton, students engage in specifically designed scaffolded reflective activities both within the classroom setting and in the blended learning context. Each contains diverse developmental pedagogic methods, with varying levels of control, leading toward independence and a skill framework for working life. The activities undertaken aim to cultivate growth in each of the four areas of reflection as identified by Schön and Cowan, namely, knowing in action (e.g., live interpreting, role plays, and academization of diary entries), reflection in action (e.g., think-aloud protocols and freeze-frames), reflection on action (e.g., online forum discussions and assessment matrices), and reflection for action (e.g., situational analysis, preparation, and skills gap analysis). At the beginning of the work placement, reflection is individually directed and takes the form of journaling; as the program continues and students receive work placement experience, reflection becomes social, with the journal as catalyst for dialogue.

4.1. Individual-Directed Reflection: Journaling

Scaffolding the learner is applied during each year of formative training, but it becomes particularly essential during the transition from lecture-based delivery to the work placement experience, which provides key opportunities for moving directed reflection toward effective self-reflection and provides the framework for growth into future reflexivity. Prior to embarking on the work placement experience, students are already familiar with interpreting justifications post-assignment and think-aloud-protocols during an assignment, and they will also have utilized "freeze-frame" options while undertaking an interpreting performance. The latter is similar to calling for a time-out in various sports, where the student can discuss possible strategies with tutors and peers before continuing with their interpreting assignment. The student's work placement attendance is scaffolded by a guided reflective thinking and writing tool, which is the prompt for the individualized documentation of the reflective process. This is to be completed by the learner after each observed/undertaken assignment, discussed with the site

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supervisor, and then submitted to the university-based tutor for comments and feedback to be addressed at one-on-one sessions at the university. This approach is supported by Bergson & Sperlinger (2003), who looked at a range of interpreter training courses and commented that interpreters often do not possess the necessary “framework” in order to reflect. Owen and Stupans (2009, p. 275) also argue that “Deeper levels of reflection which are a highly valued part of the learning process require significant scaffolding [and ought to encompass] regular feedback by lecturers, student groups examining various types of critiqued reflective writing, and students using self-evaluations tools against explicit criteria.”

The individual-directed reflection phase is scaffolded by the “student diary template.” The template provides both structure and flexibility (Owen & Stupans, 2009), helping students avoid what Hamilton and Druva (2010) term the “unmarked minefield” of reflection via journaling—such as rambling descriptive narratives—and allows students “to take responsibility for monitoring and making judgement about aspects of their own learning” (Tornøe, 2007, p. 102). The template, along with each student’s supervisor and tutor, together guide students toward higher quality reflection. In addition, we insist that in their reflective diary entries, interpreter trainees compare and contrast current scholarship and the views of interpreter practitioners with their own experiences and show breadth of reasoning and discussion. This not only creates a bridge between theory and practice but also provides authority and validity to support students’ decisions. Findlay, Dempsey and Warren-Forward, 2010, provide a sound review of the literature documenting the benefits of this type of journaling.

The journal created via the student diary template affords students the opportunity for documented reflection within a spatial dimension, that is, they can look backward and forward across their own development and check how they have expanded their repertoire of understanding and applying the strategies that help them resolve issues and dilemmas experienced along the way. Usher, Francis, Owens, and Tollefson (1999, p. 10) argue that by “challenging assumptions and biases [students will evidence that] their thinking has altered.”

4.2. Socially Directed Reflection: Work Placement

Many of the work placement sites at which our trainees gain experience (including interpreter agencies/organizations and educational establishments) have been involved with our degree program and its work placement since 1995. This has brought about considerable joint knowledge in administering our work placement model of learning. Feedback from site supervisors regarding their involvement with training the next generation of interpreters indicates that “it keeps our practice up to date” and “a trainee’s questioning of our practice via the diary template makes us current, and challenges our own thinking about our practice.”

The work placement coordinator, in liaison with university based tutors and work placement supervisors, manages the allocation process of trainees to each work placement site, taking into account a range of supportive factors such as a trainee’s capabilities, their preferences for geographic location (placements can be allocated across the U.K.), future job aspirations, life experiences and previous/current work experiences. For example, they may already be working or volunteering with an organization, that if placed there for the work placement experience, could create a conflict of interest and thus an alternative would need to be found. Other features considered are mobility and financial resources available for travel to sites. The above points when weighed together with the coordinator’s knowledge of the site, supervisors and personnel, allow a balanced and informed judgment to be made, and thus provide optimum “scaffolding” to match site setting to a trainee’s developmental needs from the start. This also takes into account that although the end goal is to create independent practitioners, trainees may reach the different stages of reflection at varying progression speeds and thus an individualized approach to support their experiential growth is required.

Students must meet four learning outcomes from the work placement experience:

- a. Implement effective methods of procedure in interpreting, using effective coping strategies for the domain and utilizing appropriate preparation requirements.
- b. Be able to understand and produce cohesive concepts while demonstrating diversity in both first and second language that skilfully reflects and conveys the source/target message.
- c. Function professionally and ethically within the working constraints relating to different settings and participants.

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- d. Utilizing reflective practice, conduct written and spoken diagnostic analyses of an interpreter's performance identifying the impact and outcome upon domain participants, possible alternative strategies, and the continuing professional development needs of interpreting practitioners (self and others).

The latter outcome is documented via a weekly diary of events. We require that the diary entries reflect a diverse range of "observed" and "worked" interpreting assignments and include succinct descriptions of each event (situation/participants), the preparation undertaken, the issues that arose (including environmental pressures), and linguistic, cultural, professional, and interpersonal/dynamic observations. The writing must include a discussion of possible solutions to dilemmas and encompass a self-diagnostic analysis detailing areas of competence and areas that need further development (skill gap analysis). Students must demonstrate flexible and sensitive thinking as they perform a thorough reflection on the effects and influences of the interpreter's "self" within the setting. They should also engage in reflection post-assignment and indicate how improvements could have been made.

4.3. *From Social Discourse to Social Dialogue*

This written reflection permits both the work placement site supervisor and the university-based tutor to guide students with a structural framework for discussion and analysis of their experience. This supports Vygotsky's (1978) principle that learning needs to take place within a social context. Along the course of the program, the socially directed reflection moves from a *social discourse phase*, in which the supervisor and tutor still teach and explain in an authoritative manner (mainly because the learner has not fully constructed an individual framework for reflection and still depends on other practitioners), toward a *social dialogue phase*, in which the learner becomes more independent and the supervisor and tutor can stand back, providing only brief prompts, and the discussion is now that between the tutor and a developing equal. As trainees approach practitioner status, they become adept at engaging in this social dialogue internally, achieving reflexivity in their thinking, that is, they are able to think about their own actions, thoughts, responses, and consequences, without intervention by others. Thorpe (2000, p. 82) defines this reflexivity as "the mind's conversation with itself."

During the placement, in addition to the regular sessions with the on-site supervisor (who is ultimately responsible for the support, guidance, dialogue and practical skill development of the trainee on site), the trainee has mandatory sessions with university-based tutors (see rotational schedule below). Prior to these sessions, each trainee is required to submit an electronic copy of their placement diary update. The tutor will then provide written feedback to the trainee and during the sessions discuss the trainee's progress and experience to date, while drawing out key points for the social-directed reflection. It is further supported by a summarized written record of the discussion and a personal development plan which the tutor and student agree to and sign off. This permits the trainee to review points of their own reflection for further development and ensures they are on a progressive track in relation to their evidence submission for their final portfolio. The trainees can and do also show their diary entries to their site supervisors where they feel appropriate. While site supervisor qualifications and experience will vary dependent upon the domain, for example, educational settings, freelance interpreter, or interpreting agency, many are actual alumni of the degree program.

The structures of supportive roles thus put in place afford a continuous cycle of scaffolding to be created (from supervisor to tutor and back to supervisor), and although we could debate the actual nomenclature of each role, that is, *university-based tutor* and *on-site supervisor*, in reality they are a hybrid along a continuum of mentor, coach, and lecturer. They are responsible for promoting, encouraging, and guiding trainees, and ultimately ensuring that trainees meet the assessment outcomes and the professional/vocational standards. Their pivotal engagement in the scaffolding process and achieving an individual trainee's reflexivity is "one of asking skilful and challenging questions to promote deeper learning" (Owen & Stupans, 2009, p.274).

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4.4. *Assessing Reflection*

In most interpreter training programs, ours included, the reflective journal is not only part of the scaffolded personal development of the trainee but also part of the method by which the outcomes of a work placement are assessed. Thus, supervisors are often both guide and assessor. McMullen (2006, p. 333) argues that “any assessment reduces the honesty and learning value of reflective writing and of the portfolio.” It can also be the case that a trainee will feel compelled to write with a particular audience in mind (Perkins, 1996), for example, a supervisor or assessor. In designing and implementing any assessment regime for interpreter trainees, it is important to consider, how they as learners will engage with the process (Bown, 2003). Biggs (1999, p. 141) highlights the possible issue of the learner’s “economy,” about which he says, “What and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed.” This also correlates to Ramsden’s view that as far as students are concerned “assessment always defines the actual curriculum” (2000, p. 187). So, how then can one ensure the reflective writing is productive and satisfies the assessed outcomes of a course, while not narrowing the trainee’s learning experience? The first solution we found was to distinguish between university-based tutors, some of whom will eventually grade students’ diary entries, and the on-site work placement supervisors, who do not grade a trainee’s performance. This allows for an open, unconstrained relationship at the assessment level at least, as the on-site supervisor has the freedom to be a guide only. Interpreters in training are aware from the outset that the supervisors will not mark their work in any way, although the student may still consider them as potential future employers, which can unduly influence the relationship. Site supervisors complete an ungraded employer’s report upon conclusion of the placement that addresses the trainee’s overall professional attitude, the successfulness of their interpretations, their implementation of feedback, the progress made during the placement period, preparation for assignments, co-working abilities, awareness of skill limitations, evidence of continuing reflective practice, consideration of the impact on clients of a trainee’s conduct, and their flexibility in method of interpretation and role moderation decisions.

In our aim to ensure that students’ journal entries are truly reflective and not written solely with assessment in mind, we decided not to have all the diary entries that are created by an interpreter in training submitted for assessment. Instead, trainees select five diary entries of those within their portfolio to submit for assessment purposes. They are advised to select entries that illustrate and reflect diversity in their learning experiences. This second solution to a large extent reduced the pressure of assessment within reflective writing, and it keeps intact the integrity of reflective writing as a learning tool. The third solution was to provide the trainee with a rotational appointment schedule of university-based tutors (practitioners, some of whom have developed their relationship with the trainee for several years). This may at first seem quite a challenge for the trainee, who will have to deal with a range of practitioners’ views, when at times they will just want to be presented with one solution and a fixed way of “doing things.” Even though all practitioners are working within nationally defined occupational standards, the trainee may perceive their varying perspectives as conflicting opinions. However, the trainees do in fact need this approach, as Tornøe points out in her study on the use of log-based supervision in clinical settings:

Changing supervisors enhanced their learning process. By observing that different nurses did things differently, they learned that “several roads may lead to Rome.” Even though this was confusing in the beginning, most students reported that this was a valuable learning experience. Dealing with several supervisors challenged their critical thinking skills, and forced them to reflect on how they wished to develop their own nursing practice. (2007, p. 99).

The above solutions mirror the approaches to reflective learning within the BA (honors) Interpreting: (British Sign Language/English) program and are based on the premise that throughout the duration of the program, in order for beneficial growth to occur within reflective learning activities, not all reflection should be assessed; the use of reflection as an assessment tool should be gradually increased; multiple practitioner guides must scaffold a trainee’s reflective engagement; nongraded reflection should be continually utilized (results are used for formative feedback); and not all practitioner guides should grade a given trainee.

5. Conclusion

Much has been written about the skills required to become a sign language interpreter, and, in recent years, the sign language interpreting field has started to review whether training courses are fully preparing students for all aspects of professional practice. Concerns have been raised, not only as to the applied skills of the physical aspects of interpreting, but also as to the development of the cognitive frameworks for managing, reflecting upon, and responding appropriately to the myriad of situations and dilemmas practitioners may find themselves in.

From the initial stages and within the past few decades of formalized interpreter training, one of the key responsibilities interpreter trainers have had to adopt, it could be argued, is that of stakeholders within a gate-keeping process controlling entry to the profession for those wishing to work with deaf and hearing communities as interpreters. Since its inception in 1993, the BA (honors) Interpreting British Sign Language/English specialist degree program at the University of Wolverhampton has developed a variety of tangible methods to allow student interpreters to establish and grow the necessary cognitive framework for their personal and professional needs. A key tool is the scaffolded reflective diary template, which leads students from directed individual reflection, via directed social reflection, toward reflexivity. This and other structures, introduced from commencement of the course, become essential within the advanced reflective skills development required for placement practice in the final year. They embed approaches, thinking, and reflective practice that will serve as a robust foundation for future growth, continuing professional development, lifelong learning and safety of practice.

York's (1999) initial question, however, "What can the emerging students actually do?" asked on behalf of employers and clients, even in the light of national professional standards and accreditation safeguards, does require a response. Training programs that encompass scaffolded reflective learning inform employers that the graduate end product is in fact not the end product, but is autopoietic in nature. The graduate interpreters have the potential for further growth within the organizations and communities in which they will work. They can accommodate long-term sustainability and support adaptation to future situations and participants. The scaffolding that practitioners have been exposed to throughout their training, has created the framework for this self-development. In the process, the reflective learner has become a reflective practitioner, who holds the necessary toolkit for further study and a successful professional life.

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Vocabulary Games for the Beginner Interpreter Classroom

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Abstract

According to the (American) National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) and many experts in the field of court and legal interpretation, every court interpreter should strive for an ample and extensive vocabulary in his or her working languages. Although some more traditional vocabulary activities such as fill-in-the-blank exercises, crosswords, and word searches may aid prospective and practicing court interpreters reach this goal, there are some new approaches to language teaching that make this daunting task more entertaining and engaging. In this article, the author shares five vocabulary development games for any beginner spoken-language court interpretation classroom.

Key Words: vocabulary development, games, language activities, active learning

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Vocabulary Games for the Beginner Interpreter Classroom

1. Introduction

According to the (American) National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), one of the prerequisites to becoming a court interpreter is “an ample vocabulary,” and this ample lexical inventory must be in their two or more working languages (NAJIT, 2013). This is no small feat when, for example, the estimate of words in the English language alone is one to two million (Gall, 2009). The discrepancy in the estimated amount of words results from the lack of agreement if to include “slang, dialects and influences from foreign shores” to the number of words in the English language (Gall, 2009). However, NAJIT also states that judiciary interpreters must have “an extensive vocabulary ranging from formal discourse to colloquialisms and slang,” or vocabulary that “spans the entire spectrum of possible language” (González, Vásquez, & Mikkelsen, 1991, p. 455). Also, Trabbing (2002), a U.S.-certified court interpreter and author, notes that language interpreters must have “a wide range of terminology” (p. 8) and should strive to learn “three new words a day” (p. 60). In order to help prospective court interpreters learn and retain new vocabulary, I have created some dynamic and active games so that this seemingly daunting task may be more pleasant, manageable, and achievable. Many of these games precede the interpreting activities, that is, these games serve as warm-up activities to learn and practice the vocabulary before students start using the three modes of interpretation.

To participate successfully in the more challenging interpretation activities, students must have the vocabulary memorized. To help them reach this point, I teach games in which students practice the words in a more dynamic, engaging, active fashion than the rote memorization they work on at home. Almost all of these vocabulary games require movement; Jensen (2000), in “Moving with the Brain in Mind,” asserts that “teachers that have learners of any age sit too long are missing the boat” (p. 36). Activities or games that require students to walk or stand up in the classroom rather than sit at their desks promote active learning that offers “significant advantages over sedentary learning [. . . including] learning in a way that is longer lasting, better remembered” (Jensen, 2000, p. 37). Activities that require movement, even very limited movement, reach “more kinds of learners” (Jensen, 2000, p. 37). Furthermore, games are able to trigger the learners’ “intrinsic motivation and provide highly engaging challenges to promote learning” (Lo & Tseng, 2011, p. 1).

2. Classroom Structure

In the university-level class I teach, Spanish 381: Introduction to Court Interpretation, I cover ethics, criminal procedure, and the three modes of interpretation, but one of the main focuses is precisely vocabulary development. Although some of my students are seriously considering pursuing medical or court interpretation certification, most take the class as an upper-division Spanish elective. In class evaluations, students have identified vocabulary development as one of the strongest aspects of the course, and the main reason why they would recommend the class to other university students.

Vocabulary Games

At the beginning of the semester, students receive 13 thematic vocabulary lists of about 50 words each that they must memorize during the course (see Figure 1), even though memorizing is “one of the most difficult tasks for students” (Page, 2010, p. 56). In order to help students memorize the words every week, I ask them to transcribe the vocabulary lists onto index cards (2% of their grade). I also strongly encourage them to orally record the lists and to make an audio file that they can download to their electronic devices so that they can use their time at the gym or on the commute to and from campus to study. This initial memorization of the vocabulary words is done outside of class, but in the classroom I use a series of games to also work on making these words part of the students’ active vocabulary, before we move on to interpreting practice.

Figure 1: Thematic vocabulary lists

Legal and courtroom vocabulary
Crimes
Appliances
Clothing
Car parts
Tools
Road terms
Action verbs
State-of-mind adjectives
Weapons
Drugs
Insults and slang
Idiomatic expressions/proverbs

Memorizing vocabulary words from the thematic lists is just a first step in a series of learning activities and assessments that require and engage students in higher order thinking skills. The learning objective for these preliminary vocabulary activities/games, to recall the equivalent term in the other language, reflects the first category in Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains Table (1956), *knowledge*. In class and out of class, students are asked to perform other vocabulary activities such as fill-in-the-blank exercises, term-matching, writing sentences or paragraphs, crossword puzzles, word searches, and so forth, which move the students further on the Taxonomy Table to the second category, *comprehension*. I also give students writing assignments such as short scripts emulating legal affidavits, opening and closing statements, witness interrogatories, and victim statements that incorporate the newly acquired vocabulary. By asking students to apply the vocabulary in contexts that they themselves create, these writing activities move even further on the Taxonomy Table toward *synthesis*. These scripts are used for in-class as well as out-of-class practice of the three modes of interpretation.

A last activity, requiring a *higher order thinking process*—the fourth category of the Bloom’s Taxonomy Table—requires students to evaluate a term based on its context and find the most appropriate term in Spanish. For instance, Student A creates a script using the word *hood*, as in an article of clothing; Student B, receiving this script to interpret, must listen carefully to the context to determine if it is *hood*, an article of clothing, or *hood*, a car part, which are both introduced in the thematic lists.

Figure 2: Clothing

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>apron</i> | <i>delantal (m), mandil (m)</i> |
| <i>belt</i> | <i>cinturón (m)</i> |
| <i>blouse</i> | <i>blusa (f)</i> |
| <i>boot</i> | <i>bota (f); botín (m)</i> |
| <i>bow tie</i> | <i>corbata de moño (m), pajarita (f)</i> |

These thematic lists, whenever possible, have more than one synonym per entry (see Figure 2) and are considered “living documents.” That is, whenever a student offers a different interpretation for a term, as long as he or she can support that term with reputable evidence (dictionaries, newspapers, governmental Web sites, and so on), I add the word to the list. To illustrate this point, on the “car parts” thematic list, for the English word *hood* I offered two Spanish terms: *capó* and *capote*. However, one of my Mexican students used the Spanish word *cofre* while participating in a game. Because this particular word was not included on the thematic list during the semester in question, I asked the student to look for the definition of the word on the online version of the Spanish monolingual dictionary of the Real Academia Española. The student did so, projecting on the big screen the definition that said it was the term preferred in Mexico for the part of the car that contains the motor. What ensued was a class discussion about the importance of being open-minded to different terms used in different Spanish-speaking regions, as well as to know how to act professionally and assertively if one is challenged in open court by another bilingual individual who questions the validity of a word or expression used by the court interpreter.

The following games are common foreign language classroom activities, some similar to commercially available games such as Pictionary and Guesstures, that I have adapted for use in an introductory class on court interpretation.

3. Games

The vocabulary games appear here in the order that I normally use them in the classroom. Some games may be played with just one list of words, whereas others serve as good activities for review, that is, to incorporate all vocabulary covered to date. None of the games requires much or costly materials (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Materials needed for all games

One kitchen timer or sand clock for every six students
Three hundred 3×5 index cards
Two foam swim noodles (may be substituted by the fly swatters)
Two fly swatters
One hundred 5×8 index cards
Whiteboard or paper pads
Desks or chairs for each student

3.1. *“Use Your Noodle”*

I generally play “Use Your Noodle” with my students at the beginning of the class period to review words from the first thematic lists, as a warm-up activity before the class starts practicing interpretation with scripts that include these particular words. Students are able to see the Spanish words spelled out correctly on index cards, therefore improving their spelling in Spanish. They must listen to the word called out in English and recall its Spanish translation. Once they remember the word from the thematic list, they must locate it from the cards displayed.

“Use Your Noodle” forces students’ minds to “work and keep lots of vocabulary” (Trabbing, 2002, p. 41). It mimics simultaneous court interpreting to the extent that the words spoken out loud are all in English, which is the official language of the U.S. courts, and the students are engaged in searching for the Spanish equivalent in their minds and connecting it with the terms visually displayed. The game also promotes thinking fast to avoid being the player in the center.

1. Students arrange their desks or chairs into a big circle. (For a big class, form two groups into two circles.)
2. One player stands inside the circle and holds a swim noodle.
3. Each seated student receives a 5×8 index card with a vocabulary word. The word appears on one side of the card in big letters in the target language (TL) and on the opposite side in smaller font in the source language (SL). The students hold the cards with the TL-word side facing the center of the circle.
4. The teacher initiates the game by reading out, in the SL, one of the words from the index cards being held by the seated students.
5. The player in the center must quickly interpret the word into the TL, identify the index card with that specific term, and use the noodle to gently tap the student (or the desk of the student) holding the card.
6. If the player in the center succeeds in tapping the seated student with the correct word, then the two students exchange places. However, before being tapped and losing his or her place, the student who is holding the correct term can say a term in the SL that corresponds to a word on another classmate’s card; then the player in the circle must locate that card.
7. When students exchange places, the newly seated student initiates the game (back to Step 4).

Students may switch their cards occasionally during the game, so that the player in the center does not merely memorize where the words are “located.” The teacher should also have some additional index cards on hand, to replace words that students seem to have already memorized.

3.2. *“Around the Room”*

Similar to “Use Your Noodle,” because the teacher reads out all words in the SL, “Around the Room” mimics the audio-based focus and time pressures of simultaneous interpretation. However, this game goes one step further than “Use Your Noodle,” because it requires students not only to search for the equivalent TL interpretation but also to say it out loud. At times, heritage and/or native speakers know synonyms of the words being read out loud, but I remind them that only the words that are on the thematic lists will get them the coveted seat. Nevertheless, I recognize the new term as another possible interpretation by writing it on the whiteboard, creating an added learning opportunity for all.

In this game, students walk around the room, with the teacher controlling the pace. I remind the class that the pace is equivalent to the rate of speech in simultaneous interpretation, and that “the less time spent searching for equivalents [. . .] the more capacity the interpreter has available for attending SL input and generating the appropriate TL output” (González et al., 1991, p. 363).

1. Students form a circle around the classroom.
2. The teacher places two to three chairs in the center of the circle.
3. The teacher slowly reads out the vocabulary list for the week in the SL.

Vocabulary Games

4. The students walk slowly clockwise around the chairs. Each time a student comes face to face with the teacher, he or she must interpret into the TL the word that is being read.
5. If the student does not know the correct translation, he or she keeps walking. The teacher reads out the same word until a student does know it.
6. When a student says the correct word, he or she sits down on the first chair.
7. The next student who correctly translates a word displaces the first student into the second chair, and the third student displaces the other two by one seat, and so forth. Eventually, the first three seated students are, one by one, reintegrated into the circle.
8. The three winners are those who are seated when the teacher reaches the end of the vocabulary list.

For a variation, the teacher reads out a word in the TL, and students provide a synonym in the TL.




3.3. “Draw That”

“Draw That” is similar to the commercially available game Pictionary. This classroom adaptation does not require a special board, nor are the terms divided into categories. I typically use this game for review with all vocabulary words included. Because no letters are permitted, and therefore no words are allowed, students are forced to find drawings and symbols to convey the words. This activity is the perfect segue to note-taking as a memory aid for consecutive interpretation. Although there are many ways for a court interpreter to take notes during witness testimony, one suggestion is to use pictures and diagrams: “If the witness gives an answer that can be easily visualized, the interpreter may choose to draw a picture rather than noting down words” (González et al., 1991, p. 394).

1. The teacher prepares cards with vocabulary words from the thematic lists.
2. Students divide into groups of two or three; groups are paired for play against each other.
3. A player on the first team draws a card from the prepared pile.
4. After viewing the word, the student passes the card to the opposing team’s players, so that they can verify that the player’s team members call out the correct word.
5. The opposing team turns the sand clock or sets the kitchen timer for 1 minute.
6. The chosen player draws images on the whiteboard or paper to evoke the word.
7. The player’s team must guess the exact word before time runs out.

An important ground rule is that no letters are allowed. Numbers and mathematical symbols are permitted.

Figure 4: Sample drawings for different verbs

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>to doubt, to question, to wonder, to inquire</i> |  |
| <i>to yell, to shout, to scream</i> |  |
| <i>to sleep, to snooze, to nap</i> |  |

3.4. “Act Out”

“Act Out” is similar to the commercially available Guesstures. (I have actually used the Guesstures timer to hold four cards up, but I prefer that each student have only one word at a time.)

I have traditionally played this game after introducing the thematic list for action verbs. I believe it helps students learn and use synonyms because, for example, *to yell*, *to scream*, and *to shout* all require the same gesture, which will most likely evoke all three verbs from the list.

1. The teacher prepares cards with vocabulary words from the thematic lists.
2. Students divide into groups of two or three; groups are paired for play against each other.
3. A player on the first team draws a card from the prepared pile.
4. After viewing the word, the player passes the card to the opposing team members, so that they can verify that the player’s team members call out the correct word.
5. The opposing team turns the sand clock or sets the kitchen timer for one minute.
6. The player acts out the words to evoke the word he or she drew from the pile of cards. Students may point to objects in the classroom, and they may make noises like grunting, crying, and laughing, but they may not say full words.
7. The player’s team must guess the exact word before time runs out on the sand clock or kitchen timer.

3.5. “Fly-Swatting”

Because slang and idiomatic expressions or proverbs are “[some] of the most difficult elements for non-native speakers of a language, and for interpreters striving to achieve full command of their working languages [to master]” (González, 1991, p. 309), I play “Fly Swatting” not only with single vocabulary words but also after introducing idiomatic expressions.

I have all the Spanish expressions typed on a Word document that I project on the screen. I say aloud the English equivalent or translation, as well as any similar expressions in Spanish or English (see Figure 5). The players must identify the term or phrase that corresponds to the English translation. Prospective court interpreters

must have “as large a repertory as possible of both idiomatic and non-idiomatic equivalents” (González et al, 1991, p. 245); “Fly Swatting” builds this repertory because it exposes students to similar expressions or paraphrases of the idiomatic expressions/proverbs provided.

1. The teacher writes selected words from the vocabulary already covered in class on the whiteboard in the SL. (The teacher can also type up the words in advance and project the document onto the whiteboard.)
2. The students are divided into two groups. Each group lines up facing the whiteboard.
3. The two students closest to the whiteboard each receive a fly swatter.
4. The teacher says the definitions of the terms on the whiteboard, also in the SL. The teacher may also give synonyms.
5. The players must find the word that matches the definition or synonym in the medley of words and must hit the word with the fly swatter. The remaining students on each team may help the two players only by saying “left,” “right,” “up,” or “down.”
6. The first player to hit the correct term earns the point for his or her team.
7. The two players then move to the back of the line, and the next two compete for the next term.

Figure 5: Sample expressions and clues for “Fly Swatting”

| On the Whiteboard | Clues |
|---|--|
| “Birds of a feather flock together.” | “People who have the same likes and/or dislikes tend to form small cliques.” Similar expression: “Two peas in a pod.” |
| “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” | “Imprudent people don’t think twice sometimes, and they do silly things.” Similar expression: “Look before you leap.” |
| “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” | “Children inherit many characteristics from their parents.” Similar expression: “A chip off the old block.” |

4. Conclusion

These dynamic vocabulary games serve as effective precursors or warm-ups to sight translation or to simultaneous and consecutive interpretation. They allow teacher and students to quickly review vocabulary in an engaging, low-stress fashion before students are tasked with simultaneously interpreting, at 120 words per minute, scripts in which these words appear as scoring units.

A variety of vocabulary activities provides opportunities for students of all learning styles to practice and retain new vocabulary in ways that suit them, from a more passive approach, such as a fill-in-the-blank worksheet, to a more kinesthetic activity, such as the “Act Out” game. Most of the games require paired or group work, which “usually generates high levels of motivation and enthusiasm” (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, p. 47), allowing for less stressful situations. And the stakes are low, because many of the games can be played in pairs or groups, or because the “winner” is the luckiest student, not necessarily the most knowledgeable one. I have not perceived any resistance on behalf of the students to this more active-learning approach; on the contrary, class evaluations have been very positive. All activities require movement in the classroom, from simply standing to walking, bending, leaning, squatting, and so forth. This variety of postures aids concentration (Jensen, 2000, p. 36). It is more

entertaining to act out the verb *to yawn* than to write the verb in a fill-in-the-blank activity; and such opportunities to stand up and move “can energize the class” (Jensen, 2000, p. 37). Students who are more energized, more motivated, more enthusiastic, and less stressed may be better able to memorize as many as 650 new words required of them in a semester, which equates to six or seven words a day. If they are able to retain even half of those words, they will have met Trabbing’s (2002) recommendation of learning three new words a day, and they will be advancing toward the goal of an extensive, ample vocabulary (p. 60).

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StreetLeverage.com: A Social Web for Interpreter Educators

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StreetLeverage

Abstract

This Open Forum article features an interview conducted with Brandon Arthur, curator of StreetLeverage.com. In this interview he describes the creation of StreetLeverage.com and the ways in which it is impacting educators, students, and practitioners. He explores the ways in which social media is shaping our field and how educators can embrace this new form of publishing in order to provide students with rich, meaningful material to bridge theory and practice. Finally, the article expands on the role of live events that build on dialogue as a mechanism for mobilizing interpreters and bringing changes to the profession.

Key Words: social media, blogs, vlogs, dialogue, leadership, education

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StreetLeverage.com: A Social Web for Interpreter Educators

Brandon Arthur is a signed language interpreter in the United States, nationally certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and a passionate industry entrepreneur. He has worked on both the practicing and business sides of the signed language interpreting industry for the past 16 years. He is the founder and curator of StreetLeverage.com, an online community of reflective practitioners dedicated to providing insight and context on industry trends and developments.

Deb: Thanks for taking time to talk with me. StreetLeverage, per your Web site, is a community blog that offers interpreters context and insight on industry issues and topics. You say that this context is what is needed for interpreters to make informed decisions in a rapidly changing industry, and that the blog is one way to amplify the voices of interpreters. At the same time, interpreter educators around the globe are seeking and finding new ways to reach students, and using social media as a tool to enhance the education of signed language interpreters is a key strategy. StreetLeverage seems to be playing a key and very public role in influencing educators, students, and interpreter practitioners. So, how has that happened? When you started StreetLeverage, what did you hope would happen in terms of educating interpreters?

Brandon: Well, it's an interesting thing. To be very honest, I don't know that I appreciated the academic interest in the blog initially. The concept really came from a desire to connect people. I feel very fortunate in my career to have traveled and have seen a lot of amazing people at work and to be able to work alongside a lot of amazing people. And as I progressed in my career, having a variety of views of daily practice, I began to wonder about where we were going—everybody is so passionate about their own little sliver in the industry but perhaps not regularly stepping back to consider how everybody connects and the implications of those connections. I thought, What could we do if we were a little bit more aware of one another's ideas, projects, and concepts? And so the idea initially was, Let's just create a space where people can come and share ideas and perspectives and where people could engage with these new ideas and perspectives. I was hoping it would in turn stimulate reflection, a level of introspection that when they were out doing their daily work, that they would think—Oh, I remember reading about so-and-so's idea and the comments on it Now, how do I now apply that? Or how do I look at it through a different lens? Again, the goal is create a community of reflective practitioners.

Relative to education, as the site grew I started seeing comments from educators. Then I started getting e-mail saying, "I love this stuff. I'm using it in my classroom; my students are benefitting." It's just not something that had initially occurred to me, but it seems now that educators and students are probably one of the larger—if not the largest group of folks that consume the articles, interviews, and comments on the site. It's great that it has turned out this way. It's actually more meaningful to me—to be very honest. It may not make for a great interview, but it was completely unexpected.

Deb: I think that serendipity is probably the most wonderful thing that can happen in any aspect of our lives, so it sounds like it's doing exactly what it's supposed to be doing.

Open Forum

Brandon: It seems to be. And—as you and anybody who is putting forth an effort that doesn't have a revenue model per se, and StreetLeverage doesn't, know—it takes a lot of time and commitment, but I am certainly the largest beneficiary. I get to rub elbows with many industry titans and I get to spend time learning from them. When they come to me and say, Hey, what do you think about this? I'm like, I should be asking you these questions as opposed to the reverse. So it's much to my own benefit. You might consider it a completely self-serving effort. It is certainly a huge—a huge benefit to me.

Deb: Okay. Given that that you hadn't anticipated that your target audience or the largest number of consumers that are using that material in really important ways are interpreter educators, have educators talked to you a little bit about what they're doing with the material? Because I assume they're doing something more than just having students read it.

Brandon: I've had contact with a few interpreter educators on how they use the site with their students. In my view educators are primarily using it as an exposure tool. This works because media and publishing today are so swift that traditional academic institutions struggle to keep up with what's current, and all the while knowing it will only change tomorrow. Additionally, educators are using the site as both a way to reinforce concepts and introduce others. It helps that it all comes wrapped in the practical experience of working practitioners and educators. What I enjoy about StreetLeverage is that it allows students to link classroom learning with current issues and practices. The educators that I have a more personal relationship with reveal that they can feel constrained by programs or by what is required of them by virtue of their position. StreetLeverage is also an outlet for them to encourage their students to see other points of view and opinions that the educator may not be able to espouse in their particular program. I like to believe that the site is helping, in some small way, to close the education-to-work gap. It's interesting, Deb, because I think in many ways, StreetLeverage is a platform for people who otherwise wouldn't share their ideas or views, and that is what makes it so valuable to the interpreting community and as a tool for educators.

Deb: Can you say some more about that?

Brandon: It's about a perception that permission is necessary. We look at the industry titans and say, They've been in the field 50 years, they're a Ph.D., they've written, like, 5,000 books; of course they should have the stage, of course they can share their ideas—they have earned it. When people are presented with an opportunity, in my view, they often question if they have permission. Often when I approach people asking them to consider writing for StreetLeverage they're like, Me? Really? And then they write something, and it's wildly successful. An example of that would be Amy Williamson-Loga, who very honestly was somewhat timid about the idea; and her piece has had nearly 10,000 hits, and her perspective is really resonating with people. Without being asked and without a community platform she may not have taken an opportunity to share her views.

Deb: I think it's a really good example, though, of somebody who I would view as an educator, but she probably doesn't view herself as an educator but the impact she is having from her article on StreetLeverage is education and dialogue that reached nearly 10,000 viewers.

Brandon: That's right.

Deb: Now you've got live events in addition to the blog—can you describe those for us?

Brandon: StreetLeverage—Live is an effort to extend the dialogue that is occurring online to a live environment. The impetus behind the live event began at my job. I travel quite a bit, and I get to meet with a lot of interpreters. And oftentimes, the whisper in the hall is, I love what you are doing with Street Leverage. To which I say, I don't see you commenting on the site. Why not? They are surprised to know that I know that, but I am moderating the site after all. StreetLeverage doesn't have some massive team of media people. It's me in a dark room with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich trying to make connections. While encouraging these folks to comment on the articles and interviews, they're like, Oh, no, I wouldn't dare put something out there. I'm too nervous. In digesting

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their comments, I thought, if we could create a live event where people could look each other in the eye and not have the fear of the faceless critic from cyberspace, maybe they would be more inclined to share. And so we did what I would call the pilot event in the Washington, D.C., area last November (2012), and it was very successful. We had great speakers and had a lot of very insightful comments from participants, which had everyone from students to very experienced practitioners. It was a confirmation to me that some people need the live environment to feel a little bit more comfortable.

The live event consists of a main session where speakers share their ideas and engage with the audience following their talk, modeled after TED Talks. Speakers then host workshops in the afternoon doing a deeper dive on their ideas. My hope is that the live events will lead to something that's collectively actionable. At the end of the day, it's great to be a community of reflective practitioners and people considering the work, but if we don't focus the power of the ideas that we're sharing, then I will personally feel as though we have missed our biggest opportunity.

Deb: And so you host StreetLeverage, both ASL vlogs and blogs, and the live events, and you have a presence on Facebook. Any other forms of social media that you are using as an educational tool or a tool for mobilizing idea exchange?

Brandon: We are on Twitter, which I know you know. You re-tweet some of that. We are also on LinkedIn. I want StreetLeverage to be in all the places where a practitioner connects so that we can be there when they need insight from a fellow colleague. An example: I got an e-mail yesterday from a gentleman that said, Hey, I'm having a problem where I'm being challenged for some of my personal work by an agency. Do you have any articles that might help? I sent him references to a couple of pieces, to which he later replied sharing how useful they were. I want StreetLeverage to be there when a practitioner has a need for a moment of reflection. I want them to tap into the collective power of shared ideas to help impact their current situation for the better.

Deb: So relevant—and it strikes me that you've really taken advantage of the power of currency—I mean knowledge as currency and fresh knowledge as currency—and put it out there. I have a couple of grad students who are doing literature reviews this term, and they have asked about whether they can cite blogs. And that's not traditional, obviously, so we have had some great conversation about what is publishing in this new world of social media and that students will use those blogs, vlogs, and so on. But that's a challenge for educators as we find new ways to quote the material, and that's material that they need. Students are contrasting traditional published material that may have been published some 20 years ago and looking at the concepts with a current connection. I think you've really caught onto something that's huge. It's got the potential to change practice for those teaching in traditional programs as well because we're challenged now to look at where knowledge is created, what publishing means, and the role of social media in our teaching and learning environments.

Brandon: I can appreciate the challenge. Clearly, we don't want to consider material that isn't well researched or well thought out. And unfortunately the quality of writing and accuracy of the information on the Web is inconsistent. I can appreciate the trepidation that educators have about more live-time media as a result. Anybody can publish his or her own mental drip. With that said, I do think that there needs to be a level of recognition that practices evolve and, as they do, the best way to share those developments will be on the social web.

Deb: You've been talking about it as publishing, and that's what it is, but how do educators ensure that students are being exposed to quality, that sites are able to maintain quality and critical reflection? What kinds of quality markers should they look for when including social media sites that students incorporate in their learning?

Brandon: Great question. In my view, I would be encouraging students to visit sites that have multiple perspectives and voices—and it's part of why I view myself more as a curator than I do a blogger. StreetLeverage.com has a large number of contributors, and it's the power of the different perspectives that helps keep what I would consider appropriateness and truth and proper practice alive and well. Achieving those things is often harder when it's a single voice. It is my view that if you have a convergence of voices, you have an inherent check and balance. If you look in the comments on sites with multiple voices, you will note that someone will post

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something that will be way off, and then the community of people practicing will quickly reframe, will adjust, will challenge, and then slowly but surely it works itself out. It's the power of community that keeps the quality high. And that's not to say that there aren't brilliant people out there that are sharing all the time, but I think it's a stronger educational tool when a blog or vlog represents the experiences of many people, not just one person. It's not absolutely required, but another marker is when people are encouraged to comment using their real names. If there's a sense that one's comments are attached to them, they moderate their comments a little more, and the rest of the community helps to support an appropriate model of engagement.

Deb: Brilliant. Lessons learned in your short history?

Brandon: This is the question that I think I've struggled with the most. There are several. One big lesson that I have learned is that ideas can and do in fact change the profession. I've also learned that people enter the dialogue in many different ways. Lynnette Taylor was helping me one evening while we were at the first StreetLeverage—Live event. I was talking to her about a couple of comments on the site that I was struggling to get over. She shared, "You know, Brandon, oftentimes that approach is the only way people can start to participate in the dialogue, and it takes that act for them to accept being challenged and then to progress along." With that, another big lesson learned is that people feel a tremendous satisfaction when they feel their contribution has made a difference.

A great lesson and also the most beautiful part of the StreetLeverage effort: I love telling the current week's writer how their piece is doing. It's so satisfying to say to an Amy Williamson, who as mentioned was a little bit nervous—Your piece is killing it! You're seeing thousands of hits—which is rock star status on this little Web site. The satisfaction that is evident, particularly when they may not see themselves as an educator, as you mentioned. When an idea has been embraced and people express benefit from having reading it, change has occurred. Now for the greatest lesson learned, people are inclined to contribute, they just need an invitation. Again, it's often about feeling a need for permission. Once they realize how important their contribution is, and can be, people begin to take action and feel more accountable for their work. It is very satisfying to people to begin to act for the betterment of the field.

Deb: Excellent. Questions I should have asked you and I didn't?

Brandon: I don't know that there are any particular questions. The only thing that really comes to mind is how academia can reinforce an effort like StreetLeverage. In my view, academic institutions and educators should be encouraging thought leadership and individual contribution at every stage of development within one's career. This type of reflection is valuable, and if done appropriately and in appropriate spaces, contributes to the progression of our field exponentially; as opposed to waiting for permission. We have so many brilliant people in the field; we just need to liberate their voices and ideas. Another question may be, what can academia do to further the learning on the social web? To your earlier point, this will be a medium that isn't going away and will be increasingly used in the classroom. For institutions to adopt it and create a mind-set of encouragement—I think the students will be better positioned to connect with their colleagues and think through the challenges we do and will face as a field.

Deb: I really appreciate all you are doing. This has been very enlightening to think about the ways social media can be a real-time tool in student learning. Thanks you for your time, leadership, and dedication to our field. The world is a better place because of StreetLeverage.

Reference

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Dissertation Abstracts

In order to inform our readers of current research on translator and interpreter education and training, we regularly feature abstracts of recently completed theses. If you have recently finished a master's or PhD thesis in this field and would like it to be included, please send an abstract of 200–300 words, along with details of the institution where the thesis was completed, the year in which it was submitted, and a contact email address. Submissions should be sent to Dissertation Abstracts Section Editor Carol Patrie at carol.patrie@gmail.com.

Exploring Learner-Centeredness within an American Sign Language/English Interpreter Training Program

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PhD dissertation, Texas State University, 2013

Key Words: ASL/English interpreter education, learner-centered, interpreter training, adult education

The aim of this single-case study was to explore learner-centeredness for seven, full-time faculty members who teach in an American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpreter-training (IT) program at San Antonio College (SAC) in San Antonio, Texas. A more thorough understanding of what it means to be learner-centered, the influences that contribute to learner-centeredness, and how learner-centeredness is modeled in the classroom may benefit multiple stakeholders.

The site chosen for this study, the department of ASL/English IT at SAC, is unique in several ways including the number of students enrolled and the number and diversity of full-time faculty. In addition, the department has developed an innovative service-delivery model for interpreting services that allows for more control of the student internship experience. Also, the department is the only ASL/English IT program in Texas to require passage of state certification for interpreters as a graduation requirement. Finally, it is the only ASL/English IT program in Texas with accreditation by the Collegiate Commission on Interpreter Education, (CCIE) and with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, (THECB) Exemplary Status designation.

The results of this study highlight critical domains that distinguish learner-centered instruction from the more traditional, teacher-centered paradigm. In addition, this study identifies characteristics of deaf culture and a visual language like ASL that may foster learner-centered behaviors. Finally, this study borrows from teacher theory to help explain how faculty members may struggle with defining learner-centered teaching while excelling at describing learner-centered behaviors.

Dissertation Abstracts

The Role of Self-Confidence in American Sign Language Interpreters: A Field Study of Sign Language Interpreters in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

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Master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 2012

Key Words: ASL interpreting, interpreter training, self-confidence, self-efficacy, positive self-talk, language anxiety

In seeking to determine the underlying causes of and strategies for overcoming poor self-confidence in American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting students, the author conducted a series of 15 interviews with Interpreter Education Program (IEP) students, novice interpreters, experienced interpreters, and experienced interpreters/interpreter educators. Results indicate that positive self-talk, deep breathing, meditation, and yoga were all techniques used by interpreters to ameliorate the effects of anxiety and self-doubt—thereby allowing interpreters to maintain composure and effectively complete the interpreting assignments. It was also indicated that differentiating between one's self-worth as an individual and one's skill as an interpreter was helpful in allowing interpreters to persevere despite experiencing lapses in self-confidence.

Assessing Interpreter Intercultural Sensitivity

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PhD dissertation, Union Institute and University, 2012

Key Words: American Sign Language, Applied Linguistics, Deaf Studies, Sign Language Interpreting, and Intercultural Communication.

Signed language interpreters, who work regularly between at least two languages and between at least two cultures, must be sensitive to cultural differences and able to respond to these differences in an effective and efficient manner. In today's era of global citizenship, interpreting agencies, organizations, educators and mentors, as well as society in general prize intercultural sensitivity. Yet, to date, in an extensive review of the literature, no empirical studies of this population have been uncovered. No base line has been established. This research study used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess the intercultural sensitivity orientations of 189 American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. This study expanded the use of the IDI to a new population, signed language interpreters, and described normative standards for this group. The study was exploratory in nature in that it investigated carefully defined degrees of intercultural sensitivity. It also explored potential correlations between stages of intercultural sensitivity and certain population descriptors, such as demographics, credentialing, motivational factors, and linguistic and cultural exposure. A profile emerged that showed that the population under study, as a group, had a developmental orientation (DO) in minimization (97.43), which tends to overvalue cultural commonalities and undervalue cultural differences. The spread of orientations was wide, with slightly

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more than half in minimization and the remainder almost equally divided between ethnocentric and ethnorelative worldviews. When interpreters try to develop a shared vision, approximately one-quarter will want to discuss differences whereas the remaining three-quarters will want to focus on commonalities. In addition to investigating the IDI development scores of interpreters, this research study also tried to determine whether or not there were significant differences in the intercultural sensitivity of various interpreter groupings in terms of demographic and background variables. Of myriad factors, only age first learned (linguistic and cultural exposure) proved significant for ages 13–15 (positively correlated with DO) and for ages 0–2 and ages 3–5 (negatively correlated with DO).

Predictors of Successful Performance on U.S. Consortium Court Interpreter Certification Exams

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PhD dissertation, Universidad de Alicante, Spain, 2012

Key Words: Aptitude, modes of interpreting, domains of skills, certification exams, perceived levels of difficulty

The author sought to discern whether or not success in one mode of interpreting on the oral certification exams for court interpreters—administered by the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts—exams that act as the most important gatekeepers to the profession in the United States, could potentially indicate performance aptitude for the other two modes. To answer this question, the author used a three-pronged approach. First, she examined recent scholarship that examines the three modes of interpreting, considering case studies and theoretical models in order to break down each mode into discrete domains of skills and abilities that may or may not predict success on the Consortium certification exam. Next, a study was carried out in which over 36% of court interpreters in one U.S. state in the Spanish/English language pair at three levels of expertise articulated their *perceptions* of the three modes of interpreting in relation to their experiences in testing and training, their use of the three modes while practicing in court, and perceived levels of difficulty of each mode. The perceptions articulated by practicing professionals did *not* wholly align with the outcomes one would expect based on theory, making the posing of questions of aptitude on an empirical level more urgent.

The ensuing statistical analysis of a data set containing nearly 6,000 raw exam scores generated substantial data supporting the relationship between success in the simultaneous mode and overall success on the Consortium certification exam, strengthening the legitimacy of considering the implementation of a bifurcated testing model for court interpreter certification, especially for languages of lesser diffusion for which full versions of oral exams do not yet exist.