7

Transliteration: What's the Message?

Elizabeth A. Winston

INTRODUCTION

Transliteration is a specific form of sign language interpreting. It is the process of changing one form of an English message, either spoken English or signed English, into the other form. Interpreting, in contrast, refers either to the general process of changing the form of a message to another form, or to the specific process of changing an English message to American Sign Language (ASL), or vice versa. The assumption in transliteration is that both the spoken and the signed forms correspond to English, the spoken form following the rules of standard English and the signed form being a simple recoding of the spoken form into a manual mode of expression. The guidelines for the spoken form are relatively clear. It is the signed form that lacks any sort of standardization at the level of systematic recoding of spoken utterances. Indeed, the signed forms themselves are variously referred to as Pidgin Signed English, Manually Coded English, and even foreigner talk.[1]

[1]These terms represent a few of the terms used to describe the contact varieties of signing and speaking (or mouthing without voice) that are used when deaf people who rely on signing and hearing people who rely on speaking wish to communicate. Pidgin Signed English (PSE) is discussed by many authors, including Marmor and Pettito (1979). Manually Coded English (MCE) refers to forms of signing that encode various formal features of spoken English in manual signs. These features are generally morphemic: copula, tense agreement, inflectional and derivational morphemes, as well as root morphemes of English. They are intended to be

It is not the aim of this chapter to discuss the labels used for the forms of the signed message. Rather, the goal is to describe some of the features of the signed forms in relation to the strategies used to produce a message match in the target language. The focus in this study is on the form of the signed message when it is the target form because it is the form often requested by those using a transliterator. The question of the form of the signed message when it is the source language is equally significant, and a similar study centered on this aspect will be invaluable to our understanding of the English forms of signing and transliterating.[2] The present study proposes that the signed form is more than a simple recoding of spoken English into signed English. It is a complex combination of features from ASL and from English and is accomplished by conscious strategies employed by the transliterator. The form of the target message is analyzed here in terms of these conscious strategies, conscious in that they are planned by the transliterator as opposed to being either randomly or erroneously produced.

DEFINITIONS OF TRANSLITERATION

The form of signed transliteration is vaguely defined in a few texts. In fact, it is not actually the form of the message that is described but the process of transliteration that produces the form. Frishberg's (1986, p. 19) text, which is used for teaching sign language interpretation, defines transliteration as "the process of changing an English text into Manually Coded English (or vice versa)." This definition is only marginally helpful in understanding transliteration and the forms of the signed message since there are several signed codes for English, each with its own distinct principles for encoding English. (See S. Supalla, 1986, for a discussion of these forms.)

In the process of transliteration, any of these codes, or any combination of these codes, might be used. The effectiveness of these codes for transliteration has not been studied. However, their effectiveness for everyday communication has been seriously questioned. Marmor and Petitto (1979) found that even skilled users of these codes did not accurately represent

---

literally represented on the hands through the use of signs, many of which are borrowed from the lexicon of American Sign Language (ASL). Further description of these forms is in S. Supalla (1986). Cokely (1983) describes the contact varieties as forms of foreigner talk. For a broader understanding of the complex nature of the manually signed versions of English, the reader is referred to the literature already cited as well as to various items listed in the reference section.

[2]A study of this kind is now in progress at Gallaudet University, under the direction of Ceil Lucas and Clayton Valli. The data collected and the results of this study will provide much-needed information in the area of transliteration.

the spoken message on their hands in one-to-one communication. If this is a problem for speakers who control both the speed and the content of the communication, it is logical to assume that an even greater problem in message match develops for the transliterator. In a transliterated setting, it is the speaker who has control of the speed and content of the source message, not the transliterator. Since the transliterator does not have control of either speed or content, the use of such coding systems for transliterating must also be seriously questioned. Thus, this first definition of transliterating as a simple encoding process inadequately describes both the form of the message and the production process.

The instructional text of Caccamise *et al.* (1980, p. 3), describes transliteration as changing "'only' the *mode* of the sender's communication or message . . . e.g., English speech to a signed or manual code for English." This definition allows for more flexibility in the form of the message since it allows for more of the contact varieties of signing. This increased flexibility, however, leads to the question of which variety or varieties can be used or expected by any given consumer and transliterator. There are no comprehensive descriptions of any of the contact varieties that are in use among English speakers and ASL signers. The variety of forms is multiplied when deaf consumers whose native language is some type of signed English, rather than ASL, are included in the group of target consumers. This definition, while allowing for more flexibility, thus does not provide a clear description of the signed output.

One approach to the description of transliteration entails analysis both of the problems faced during the transliteration process and of the strategies used by transliterators to deal with these problems or constraints [Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), 1984]. This perspective describes transliterating as English-like signing, which by its very nature does not have a standardized form. This lack of standardization of sign forms results in "intermediate varieties" of signing that are "incapable of fully conveying the grammatical/syntactic information" (CIT, 1984, p. 95) of the source language. This perspective views the target form as a less than complete message, more in the form of a pidgin that can provide a means of communication but cannot provide all the subtleties of either language. The CIT discussion of transliteration centers on strategies used by transliterators to add clarity and meaning to the inadequate form of signed English, these strategies being various borrowings from ASL. Their discussion also provides many insights into the problems of making an inadequate form (signed English) more meaningful and clear. It stresses the need for borrowing features from ASL in order to produce this clarity.

S. Supalla (1986) approaches the question of signed forms of English from a slightly different perspective. His discussion centers on the occurrence of features of visual languages in signed forms of English, not be-

cause of the inadequacy of English but because of the adequacy of signed languages in dealing with visual needs. This is a different but important perspective in an analysis of transliteration. Since the goal is to provide a visual target form that not only resembles to some extent spoken English structures but at the same time is also comprehensible, it is appropriate to use forms that are specific to visual languages such as ASL in order to achieve clarity and meaning. It is also appropriate to include features of English that are visual, such as mouthing. The present study is conducted from the perspective that visual features from ASL, borrowed to clarify an English message, can be expected in the target form; their occurrence is a logical result of trying to use a visual mode for a spoken language. Any definition that precludes or ignores the features of visual communication in favor of English structure cannot adequately describe transliteration.

It was helpful during the course of this project to consider perspectives on interpretation that are not specific to sign language per se but make pertinent reference to the principles and practices of interpreting between various spoken and written languages. Many of these descriptions and discussions can be extended to include sign language interpreting, and specifically, transliterating. Nida (1976) discusses the question of translatability, in general, and whether any sort of information transfer by means of interpreting is even feasible. He concludes that, while exact equivalence of meaning, including all the linguistic and cultural nuances of one language transferred completely to another, is not possible, functional equivalence is possible. By functional equivalence, he means the production of a message that is pragmatically similar. He (Nida, 1976, p. 63) includes the following reminder about the general nature of communication, a factor often forgotten by those who discuss the "correctness" of an interpreted message:

> Even among experts discussing a subject within their own fields of specialization, it is unlikely that comprehension rises above the 80 percent level. Loss of information is a part of any communication process, and hence the fact that some loss occurs in translation should not be surprising, nor should it constitute a basis for questioning the legitimacy of translating.

This statement does not excuse inadequate transliteration but simply reminds us that there are many aspects of the process that need further study and improvement. Interpreting and, more specifically, transliterating, can still be successful. The point is that we must analyze successful transliterated messages and describe how and why they are successful. Nida's comment serves as a reminder that there are limitations on even the most effective forms of communication. The legitimacy of transliterating is often questioned on the basis of its inadequacy. But perhaps the rather limiting

definitions of transliteration make the process appear inadequate; perhaps, also, expectations about the capabilities of any sort of information transfer are higher than normally expected of even direct communication processes.

Another valuable discussion of interpreting, specifically, translation from one written form to another, is provided by Casagrande (1954). He describes four possible goals of the translator when producing a text, each of which can affect the final form of the message. These goals are the following:

1. Pragmatic: the goal is to translate a source message as efficiently and as accurately as possible, with a focus on the meaning rather than on the form of the message.
2. Linguistic: the goal is to "identify and assign equivalent meanings" (Casagrande, 1954, p. 337) between the source and target languages; the form of the target is directed by grammatical concerns rather than by meaning.
3. Aesthetic-Poetic: the goal is to produce the message in a form that is aesthetically similar in both languages.
4. Ethnographic: the goal is to include cultural background and explanations of text from one language to another.

These goals are not mutually exclusive; each translator works to achieve a final text that reflects the original message by balancing the requirements of each goal. Transliterators likewise work to achieve a final message that is a balance of these goals. Transliterators are more constrained by the linguistic goal than are other kinds of interpreters because they are expected to produce a form that resembles the source English message. They also deal with the pragmatic goal of producing a message simultaneously with the speaker, as well as with the final two goals.[3] The balancing of these goals results in a form that resembles English in some of its features, ASL in other of its features, and a blend of both that may be specific to the contact varieties and the effects found whenever a spoken message is recoded in a visual-manual mode.

---

[3]Another interesting assumption made about transliteration is that this English also reflects the form of the speaker's message. It is assumed that, even though many of the spoken English morphemes such as tense marking and plurals are omitted from the signed version, the structure and order of the signs produced follow the structure and order of the speaker. The data of the present project indicate that this is not necessarily the case. Although the form produced can reflect an English order, it is not necessarily the order of the speaker. This difference is described in this chapter under the section about restructuring.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The output, or target form, of any interpreted message is always determined by those consumers directly involved in the communication. Even interpreters working between languages with very standardized forms can produce different interpretations of the same message. When dealing with forms that are not standardized, the variety of interpretations can be even greater. The present study describes the form of a transliterated message that occurred in one setting with one transliterator and one consumer. The objective is not to assess this form in terms of the appropriateness of its use in transliteration. Rather, the objective is to analyze the form in terms of the strategies used by transliterators. These strategies are reflected by the features of the transliterated target form. Transliterators use these strategies to produce a target form that conveys most of the information of the source language message. A basic assumption of this study is that a transliterated message is not simply a codified, inadequate version of a spoken English message. On the contrary, it is proposed that transliteration is a process that includes a combination of English and ASL features capable of conveying the source message as clearly and unambiguously as any other form of interpreting. It is necessary to reiterate that this is true when the client is to some extent bilingual in ASL and English. The features from English include word order and mouthed English words.[4] ASL features include lexical choice, head and body shifting for marking phrases and clauses, and use of location.

The hypothesis of the present study is that transliterators produce signed target language messages that contain a mixture of English and ASL features. This mixture of features, rather than causing confusion to the watcher, provides enough detail to produce a message that is clear and unconfusing to the watcher.

In addition, it is proposed that these features reflect conscious strategies used by transliterators during analysis and production of the target form, rather than random productions or errors. This is evidenced by the transliterator's feedback and comments about the target forms during an interview conducted after the data were analyzed. The strategies discussed here and the features that they reflect are (1) conceptual sign choice, (2) addition, (3) omission, (4) restructuring, and (5) mouthing. Additional features of the data corpus are not analyzed in comparable detail. The target form features are categorized in terms of differences from the source form of spoken English. In the evaluation of the data, the features that added to the clarity of the message are analyzed; those portions of the form that con-

---

[4]It may be that the word order is not English word order per se but an order that is shared by both English and ASL.

tained mistakes or errors are not analyzed or described. This determination is subjective in the same way that any discussion of "correct" interpretation is subjective. In addition to the researcher's judgment, the transliterator was consulted in many of the cases about her reasons, or strategies, in using specific features. There are other measures that can and should be used to further determine the adequacy of any transliterated message, for example, the consumer's comprehension, the comprehension of other consumers, other interpreters' agreement with the form choice. For the preliminary description presented here, the researcher's judgment, the interpreter's judgment, and the apparent satisfaction of the consumer with the transliteration are relied upon in assessing the adequacy of the message form.[5]

DATA COLLECTION AND TRANSCRIPTION

The data for this study were collected from a university-level course that was regularly transliterated by the same person. The transliterator and the deaf consumer had, at the time of the videotaping, worked together in this course once a week over a span of eleven weeks, as well as in another course during the same semester and over the same amount of time. The topic of the course was familiar to both the transliterator and the consumer; they were accustomed to working with each other and with the instructor, as well as experienced with the procedures for the class and the vocabulary and content. The purpose in choosing these particular data was to exclude, as much as possible, the type of transliteration that occurs when the transliterator is unfamiliar with the topic, the consumer, and the vocabulary. In the present case, the goal is a processed, analyzed form of the target message, as opposed to a more mechanical reproduction of the English sounds. This, of course, reflects the assumption that this type of transliteration is appropriate and does provide an accurate portrayal of the source message. In addition, the consumer is not a native ASL signer but an English signer in the process of learning ASL. The consumer expected the transliteration to be patterned on English but also "conceptually accurate," that is, effective in conveying the meaning of the speaker as well as the form. This represents a balancing of two of the goals outlined earlier: pragmatic and linguistic transliteration. It is assumed, for this particular situation, that the need for efficiency and clarity motivates use of ASL features, and the need for English structures motivates use of English features.

---

[5]Consumer satisfaction, apparent or real, is an issue that is often only superficially discussed at best. It is an area of extreme importance that warrants serious attention.

The transliterator in this study is a nationally certified transliterator. In addition to her qualifications as a transliterator, she has a Master's degree in the academic specialty in which she transliterated for the data corpus of this study. Information about the strategies used in the transliteration process was gathered in an interview with the transliterator after the data were analyzed. The researcher's experience as a transliterator, as well as discussions with other transliterators, provided additional insights about features found in the data and their relation to the strategies employed.

A transcription of approximately twenty-five minutes of the classroom lecture was analyzed. Segments of the text from two different time periods were selected for the analysis. Constraints on the choice of text segments included high audibility of the source message, for purposes of comparison, and high visibility of the transliterator. One important area excluded from this study is teacher-student interaction. The description of features used by transliterators both to indicate the speakers and to include as much information as possible is essential to understanding transliteration. Unfortunately, most of the student participation is unintelligible on the videotape. The present analysis is thus limited to the transliteration of the instructor's lecture.

The transcription of the data consists of three parts: transcription of the source message; transcription of the manual signs by means of a gloss and any additional description needed to identify the form of the sign produced; and a transcription of the mouthing that accompanies the signs. Only the mouthed words and parts of words that are clearly recognizable on the videotape are included in the transcription. This leaves many gaps in the mouthed transcription since many parts of the words are not visible, especially with a two-dimensional videotape picture. Mouthing, however, is an important part of transliteration and is included in the analysis whenever possible. In discussing data from the tapes, and in presenting examples, the following conventions are used: first, the original spoken message is orthographically represented, in italics; next, ASL signs are represented with an English gloss-label, in uppercase (any further description needed to clearly identify an ASL sign is added parenthetically after the ASL sign citation); finally, the mouthed form that accompanies the manual signs is framed with double quotation marks, all within square brackets. An example of this transcription technique is the following:

Go to the store. → GO (to the right) STORE ["go to the store"]

The analysis focuses on the five categories, or strategies, earlier described as sign choice, addition, omission, restructuring, and mouthing. Although several additional features were identified in the target form that added clarity to the message, these are not discussed in detail here. They appear to be very important, but there is not enough information about

these features, as they are used in ASL, to be able to analyze their uses when borrowed for transliterating. A more detailed description of these features and many others is needed.

ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES

Sign Choice

The first strategy, sign choice, was originally defined in this study as the use of a conceptually accurate sign in place of a literal translation of the English word. Although the idea of conceptual accuracy is somewhat elusive, the reference is to the appropriate portrayal of meaning in each language involved in the transliteration process. To claim that a manual sign is more or less conceptually accurate depends entirely on one's understanding of the meaning of the sign and of the intended word. In sign language interpreting, however, the term "conceptual accuracy" is used most often to refer to the use of a sign that portrays the meaning of the word rather than the form of the word. An example of this is the English word *get*. A literal linguistic transliteration of this word would use the sign GET, which in ASL means to actually take something into one's possession. In English, the word *get* is used with many different meanings, only one of which corresponds to the ASL sign GET, as in the sentence, "I got the book." A literal transliteration would use the same sign in sentences such as the following:

1. "I got sick."
2. "She got hit."
3. "They got there."
4. "I got it," meaning 'I understand'.

None of the verbs in these four sentences uses *get* to mean to take into one's possession. A conceptually accurate transliteration would entail representation of the word *get* with a manual sign that has the meaning of the sentence rather than the form of GET. The verbs in the listed sentences might be conceptually transliterated with the following signs:

1. BECOME
2. something HIT her
3. ARRIVE
4. UNDERSTAND

An example of this strategy in the data is found in relation to the spoken utterance: *the person might _wonder_ if they should happen to turn around and see you checking things off.* Here, the transliterator uses the sign PUZZLE 'to be puzzled' instead of the sign WONDER, which corresponds to

the actual English word *wonder*. The transliterator's comment about this choice is that the sign PUZZLE reflects the meaning of the speaker better than the sign WONDER. This is clearly a conscious decision of the transliterator to use a lexical item from ASL that matches the meaning of the speaker rather than the English lexical item of the speaker.

Another example is the spoken utterance: *I want you to take a few minutes now*, where the transliterator uses the sign USE instead of the sign TAKE, which would have matched the English word. In English, the word *take* is similar to the word *get* in the earlier examples. It has many different meanings, only one of which corresponds to the ASL sign TAKE. The transliterator again chooses an ASL sign that matches the meaning of the speaker rather than the words of the speaker. The following spoken word-manual sign pairs from the data also demonstrate this sign choice strategy. In each case, it is the underlined portion of the spoken English message that is recoded to achieve a meaning-match, as opposed to a lexical correspondence:

for speech varieties which correspond to solidarity
Signed: WITH

it looks like everyone
Signed: YOU-*plural* A-L-L

because it doesn't work as well as
Signed: SUCCEED

could you make it up
Signed: INVENT

and turn it in so you can get credit for it
Signed: GIVE-TO-ME

Another example of this strategy is the use of reduplication for pluralization, which is a feature of ASL, rather than the use of a plural -s marker added to a manual sign, which is a feature of signed English. This use of reduplication was classified as a sign choice rather than an omission from the English message because the latter label would make the actual signed form seem less than adequate. The ASL feature, as part of the form of the transliterated message, shows the richness of the actual form. One example from the data is the following:

many societies → MANY SOCIETY-*plural*

As discussed in the next section, reduplication can also be aptly described as an addition of an ASL feature to the English message. The categories of omission and addition are not discrete; they overlap, and several features can be found in any given sentence. They are divided here into separate categories for discussion, but they are not so easily divided in a message.

The definition of conceptual sign choice, then, is the use of a conceptually accurate sign instead of a sign that portrays the English word form. This definition is extended to include not only words for which both a literal and a conceptual sign could be used, but also those English words that have no exactly comparable form in ASL. These words are occasionally represented by fingerspelling of the exact word and, more frequently, by the use of a manual sign with a similar meaning together with simultaneous English mouthing of the word. An interesting aspect of this is the choice of the word that is mouthed. It is sometimes the speaker's original word and, at other times, the word that is often used to gloss the sign itself. An example of this is the word *versus*. The sign that is generally gloss-labeled OPPOSITE is used for this word in the data. In this instance, the transliterator signs OPPOSITE and simultaneously mouths "versus" to match the speaker's choice of words. Other examples are the following:

Source word		Sign	Mouthing
assignment	→	HOMEWORK	["assignment"]
wonder	→	PUZZLE	["wonder"]
brilliant	→	SMART	["brilliant"]

In these instances, the transliterator chooses a conceptually appropriate sign while mouthing the exact form of the source English word to achieve clarity in the target form.

This strategy of conceptual signs plus mouthing is used in a second way by the transliterator. Rather than mouth the word choice of the speaker, a word that is usually associated with the sign is mouthed:

Source word		Sign	Mouthing
appear	→	SHOW-UP	["show up"]
data sheet	→	DATA PAPER	["data paper"]
normally	→	MOST TIME	["most time"]
stuff	→	EVERYTHING	["everything"]

No particular pattern is discernible in the data in terms of mouthing of the speaker's word versus the transliterator's own word. It is noteworthy that both are used and that the speaker's word choice does not completely dictate the mouthed form, as is widely assumed. The transliterator suggested a possible explanation for her choice of mouthed form. She feels that it is more natural for her to mouth the word that she associates with a sign. But her training, which defines transliteration as a sign-to-word correspondence, leads her to use the speaker's words. She also stated that choice of mouthing is partly determined by the amount of processing that a message requires. In a difficult passage that requires a great deal of analysis, her mouthing is much more likely to be her own. When a passage

requires less analysis to provide a clear target form, she can give greater attention to reproducing the original words on her mouth. This insight supports the suggestion that both pragmatic and linguistic goals determine the form of the transliteration.

Sign choice, as a feature of transliteration, reflects a strategy used by transliterators to achieve the pragmatic goal of the task, the efficient production of a functionally equivalent message. At the same time, the addition of mouthing seems to be an attempt to more closely approximate the English form of the message.

Addition

The second strategy, addition, refers to the use of a conceptually accurate sign either before or after a more literal equivalent. An example of this is the use of the more literal sign equivalents for the phrase "don't want," where a transliterator signs DON'T, follows it with WANT, and then signs the ASL form typically used, DON'T-WANT. This configuration expresses both the form and the meaning of the source message, thereby achieving both pragmatic and linguistic representation. Included in this category of addition are a number of ASL features that are added to signs in the target message. These features include the use of space to establish a referent (a feature used in ASL but not in English) and the addition of a negative headshake to negative signs, a nonmanual form that is used syntactically in ASL to mark negative clauses. The transliterator in the present study adds head shaking to negative signs. The addition of ASL adverbial markers with verbs occurs in one case as well.[6]

Examples of additions of signs are found in the following discourse fragments from the data corpus. In each case, the transliterator produces the addition after signing the source message fragment:

that place has to be within sight
Addition: an index 'in this area'

that doesn't happen one right after the other
Addition: NO plus a negative marker

a week from today
Addition: MONDAY

These additions occur after a restructuring of the spoken phrase. Because these data do not provide a sufficient base for generalizing about processes of transliteration, it is important to continue the search for patterns of addition in the data bases of other, similarly designed studies.

An example of the addition of a negative headshake with negative signs

---

[6]A discussion of ASL adverbial markers can be found in Liddell (1980).

occurs in the sequence I-F NOT. A negative headshake is added to the sign NOT. This is not a grammatical feature of English. It is used in ASL to mark clauses rather than single signs, but it appears to have been added here for clarity in the message.

The use of space in ASL is a feature that adds clarity to information by locating objects and entities in the signing space. For example, the speaker talks about a person who, after walking away, might turn around and look back. The transliterator, when signing this stretch of the discourse, adds a classifier predicate indicating that the person walked away to the right. When the speaker talks about the person turning back around, the transliterator signs LOOK-AT-the signer 'looking back at me' and places the sign in the same location on the right where the person had already been established as walking toward. This use of space is a feature that is not available in English but that seems to add clarity to the signed version of the source message. This entire sequence appears to combine the substitution of ASL classifier signs for the more literal signs that could have been used and the addition of signing space used as an established location for a referent.

A second example of use of signing space in the data is the establishment of a person referent to the right of the signing space. Each time the speaker refers to this person, the transliterator points to the previously established location, thereby clearly referring to the person.

Only one example of the addition of ASL adverbials was found in the data corpus. ASL uses specific nonmanual behaviors for expressing an adverb. For example, "to walk carelessly" is expressed by the sign WALK plus the simultaneous addition of the *-th* adverbial produced by the mouth, meaning 'careless'. Specifically, with this adverbial, the mouth is slightly open and the lips and the tongue protrude slightly. The example found in the present data is the *-mm* adverbial, meaning 'casually, in an off-hand way'. In this adverbial, the lips are together and protruding. The nonmanual sign *-mm* is added to the verb WRITE when the speaker discusses the possibility of recording data on a sheet without really doing any of the research. The actual spoken English words are *to mark down at random.* There are no literal equivalents of these words in ASL that express the same meaning that *-mm* expresses so clearly. With the addition of *-mm*, the goal of efficient, pragmatic transliteration is achieved.

Another feature added to transliteration is facial expression. ASL, as a visual language, relies much more than spoken English on facial expression. The kind of facial expression referred to here is in addition to the facial expression that accompanies nonmanual adverbs in ASL. A frequent complaint of consumers is that transliterators are monotone, that is, they lack any sort of facial expression. This aspect of a visual language, although not always a grammatical feature of ASL, adds clarity to the visual message

and is often missing in a transliterated message. This use of facial expression appears to be one way of representing stress and intonation. It is usually assumed that these spoken language features cannot be adequately transferred to a signed language. This is another area requiring much more investigation. The first of this type of addition in the present data is the use of an exaggerated facial expression with the sign BIG to portray the meaning 'very big'; the second example is the facial and body expression added to the signs SELF RESPECT. An expression of pride on the face and an expanded chest accompanies this sign sequence.

It can be argued that some of the features classified as additions are not additions at all but are required elements in an appropriate and accurate transliteration. The elements add clarity to the message and portray meaning in ways that are not necessarily represented by literal recoding of English words into manual signs. They are classified here as additions only because they are not generally discussed as part of the output of signed transliteration. The use of addition as a strategy is perceived as necessary for clarity in the visual message, both by the transliterator in this study and by other transliterators who served as consultants.

Omission

The third strategy consists of the omission of portions of the source language in the target form. This strategy is used to achieve the goal of efficiency: pragmatic transliteration. Many parts of English words and phrases are not necessary to the overall meaning in context; they are redundant. For example, across a stretch of discourse in English, the use of the past tense marker on each verb is unnecessary from the standpoint of context-bound, referential-and-predicational effectiveness. ASL users mark tense at the beginning of a topic and then do not mark it again until the tense needs to be changed. The transliterator in the present data deletes tense markers in recoding the English message even though there exists a set of literal sign equivalents. Likewise, English plural markings are deleted, as are affixes, such as -*ful* in the word *powerful.* The copula is also almost entirely missing from these data. Although there is a full set of literal sign equivalents for the forms of the English copula, there is only one instance of use.[7] When the speaker emphasizes the phrase *should be,* the transliterator includes the copula, not by using the sign for 'be' but by spelling B-E and emphatically mouthing it at the same time.

Another omission that occurs less consistently than those already noted is the omission of prepositions not necessary to the message. The phrase

---

[7]Copula is not used in ASL; the sign equivalents are based on a single sign meaning 'true' or 'real'. This basic form is assigned specific modifications in order to provide sign equivalents.

groups of people is signed GROUP PEOPLE.It is significant that even though the sign is omitted, the word itself is often mouthed by the interpreter. This provides a more linguistic, literal representation on one set of articulators (oral) while providing a more efficient message with the other set of articulators (manual). Mouthing seems to provide a much more consistent reflection than the hands of the literal English message.

Omission of previously established subject pronouns also occurs. The English sequence *I'm not* is transliterated as WILL NOT. This type of structure, with the pronoun omitted, is not a feature of formal English. It is a feature of ASL that is borrowed by this transliterator as a strategy to achieve the goal of efficiency in the transliteration.

Restructuring

The fourth strategy, restructuring, refers to the replacement of one grammatical structure with another. This is different from the sign choice category because sign choice mainly involves one or two-word sequences; restructuring involves changes in longer utterances. Restructuring can occur in combination with any and all of the earlier-mentioned strategies. Examples of restructuring occur within the following discourse fragments. In each case, it is the underlined portion of the spoken English message that is restructured:[8]

which is voiced 'th'
Restructured to: T-H WITH VOICE ('"th" with voice')

I'm giving you a week from today off
Restructured to: NEXT-WEEK MONDAY

more friendly and more trustworthy.
Restructured to: CAN TRUST MORE

it has to be a location which is within sight
Restructured to: PLACE YOU CAN SEE

All you're after is one word.
Restructured to: ONLY WANT ONE WORD

if it's within sight then people will
Restructured to: I-F CAN SEE THAT PLACE

These restructured discourse fragments are accompanied by mouthing of English words that correspond to the restructured form and not to the source message. This is another indication that transliteration involves more than a literal representation or recoding of spoken English.

---

[8]Note that the second example of restructuring here is also cited earlier, in the section on the strategy of addition. The sign MONDAY is an addition embedded within a restructuring.

It is noteworthy that three of the source forms are structures involving the copula, a feature not used in ASL. It may be that one cause of restructuring is forms or configurations in the source message that cannot be comparably recoded in ASL. The present transliterator, although aware that she uses this strategy, could not identify any particular feature of the message that caused restructuring. Her explanation was limited to an express awareness that some of the English utterances, as structured, would not provide a clear visual message when recoded into the target form, and, therefore, she restructured them.

Mouthing

The fifth strategy, mouthing, is described earlier in relation to sign choice. There are instances in the data when the mouthing matches the source form, and other instances when it matches the transliterated form. A match with the transliterated form is also seen in the mouthing that accompanies restructuring in the transliteration. In addition to these uses of mouthing, there is another use that occurs in the data when a specific sign that occurs can serve to recode more than one English word. On these occasions of potential ambiguity in the manual mode, mouthing is used to indicate which English word is being transliterated. The following examples show the many-to-one relationship between mouthed English words and, in each case, the co-occurring manual sign:

Sign	Mouthing
RELATE-TO	["correspond"]
	["associated"]
SITUATION	["situation"]
	["domains"]
MUST	["will"]
	["should"]
	["have to"]
SMART	["smart"]
	["intelligent"]
	["brilliant"]
VARIOUS	["variety"]
	["variable"]

Not all of these mouthed English words have literal sign equivalents. The transliterator, rather than using a different sign for each meaning, uses the same sign and simultaneously mouths the English form. In each instance, the mouthing serves to distinguish the intended meaning of the manual sign. This use of mouthing, which presupposes consumer reliance on

speech-reading, is an important strategy in transliterating. The effectiveness of this strategy, like the effectiveness of all the other strategies, is dependent on the consumer's skills and knowledge of the target form. It is one more strategy for producing both a conceptual and a literal message at the same time.

The transliterator agreed that the mouthing strategy was important for the particular consumer in the present study. Although some of the strategies, such as restructuring, are chosen because of structural incongruities between languages, the use of mouthing is determined by the consumer's needs. For different consumers, the transliterator can employ different techniques, such as fingerspelling, to provide the English equivalent.

An additional aspect of transliterating that is not described here is the phenomenon of pacing or phrasing. This includes the features used by transliterators to mark the separation of clauses in the target form. This type of marking is achieved through stress and intonation in English and through various features in ASL, some of which are described in this chapter. These features include body shifts, head nodding, signing space, and facial expressions. These features appear in the transliterated data of this study, although not necessarily in combination with ASL sentence structures. These features, in ASL, are used with entire phrases or clauses. In the transliterated message, nonmanual features similar in form to those of ASL appear to mark the beginning and ending points of the English structures. This combination of ASL and English features is a transliteration strategy that adds clarity to the message.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the analysis and description of the target message examined in this study are preliminary, the findings indicate that the form of transliteration is different from what is assumed by both transliterators and consumers. On the whole, it is apparent that at least some forms of transliteration include not only English-like signing of the source message but also many features of ASL. This type of transliteration requires skills in both ASL and English in order to achieve and blend pragmatic and linguistic goals in the production of a target message. Analyzing the source message and producing a target form that is both functionally equivalent and structurally similar to the source is a complex process and requires more than the simple recoding of English words.

This study, in the tradition of preliminary investigations, raises more questions about transliteration than are answered. It is hoped that as we understand more about the structure of ASL and the process of interpreting in general, the process of transliterating will also be better understood.

Areas of research suggested by this study include a description of the source message when it is a signed form of English and a description of different varieties of transliteration, including the varieties requested by bilingual ASL and English users as well as the varieties primarily understood by English signers. It will also be important to study the effects of a variety of speakers on the form of the signed output produced by one transliterator for one consumer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS