Chapter 5

Contact sign, transliteration and interpretation in Canada

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1. Introduction

In broad definitions of interpreting, the interpreter is understood to be working between two languages, conveying an equivalent message from the source language into the target language. The task of the signed language interpreter working between English and American Sign Language (ASL) is made more complex because of the additional, and often very confusing, dimension of English-like signed language varieties used by some members of the Deaf community in North America.

While the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in the United States has historically treated interpreting and transliterating as two different tasks, testing and awarding certification separately for each, the Canadian experience has been primarily focused on educating and testing for interpretation skills between ASL and English. The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) offers one certification process only, which evaluates an interpreter's ability to work between the languages of ASL and English. However, a need also exists within Canada for interpreters who are able to work with more English-like forms of signing, and therefore the education programs that prepare interpreters arguably should address this need.

This chapter will first address the occurrence of varieties of contact signing used by members of the Deaf community and the reasons why they exist, followed by definitions of the term "transliteration", also referred to as "interpreting into a contact variety of language". I will address how the term "transliteration" is used, and whether or not it is an effective way to describe what an interpreter does when processing and producing a message into a contact variety of signed language. Finally, implications for training and certification within Canada will be discussed.

2. Contact sign: What *is* it?

Before beginning a discussion of transliterating, a description of contact varieties of language that exist within the Deaf community is warranted. The two languages coming into contact that are considered here are ASL and English. Lucas and Valli (1989: 12) state that "the varieties of language available to participants in a contact situation range from ASL to spoken English or Signed English, and to a variety of codes for English that have been implemented in educational settings". Lucas and Valli coined the term "contact signing" which is one result of language contact: "A fifth unique outcome of language contact in the American deaf community is what we have called contact signing, a kind of signing that incorporates features of ASL and English and may include other phenomena we have described such as loan translations, fingerspelling and mouthing" (Lucas & Valli 1992: 48). Some of the varieties which result from this contact are more English-like in syntax and vocabulary while others more closely resemble ASL (Humphrey & Alcorn 2001).

The term Pidgin Sign English (PSE) has been used in the past to refer to these forms, although current research demonstrates that contact sign does not fit the criteria of a pidgin (Reilly & McIntire 1980; Lucas & Valli 1989, 1992). Throughout this discussion, I will use the terms "contact sign" or "contact signing", as coined by Lucas and Valli, and "contact variety of language" interchangeably to define the signed message created when features from ASL and English are combined.

2.1 Features of contact sign

There are a number of features which can guide an observer in determining whether a person is using a form of contact sign rather than ASL. The following discussion will highlight some of these, but for a more in-depth sociolinguistic treatment of the topic, readers are referred to Lucas and Valli (1992).

The structure of an utterance is one way of identifying a message constructed using contact sign. Contact sign often follows the grammatical order found in English. For example, wh-questions (e.g., WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW) in ASL have a specific combination of non-manual signals (NMS) that includes furrowed eyebrows and a slightly backward head tilt, along with a possible forward movement of the shoulders. One wh-question form has the wh-word occurring only at the end of the sentence, but this form does not occur when a signer follows English word order for a similar question. Sentences in ASL that would usually be expressed in topic-comment format or as conditionals would also look different when following English structure.

Specific vocabulary items that are used are another way to identify contact signing. For example, manual codes for English often have invented signs, some of which violate the constraints of sign production in ASL, such as a sign for ''track and field' that builds on the ASL sign COMPETE, using the letter "T" on one hand and "F" on the other. ASL requires that when both hands move simultaneously in a sign, the handshape must be the same (Lucas & Valli 1992), but in invented signs where

both hands move, the two handshapes may be different, as the above example shows. Another identifying feature is the use of pronouns. ASL has pronouns that are formed with an extended index finger handshape to indicate referents placed spatially, while manual codes for English have developed specific pronoun forms (e.g., HE, HIM, SHE, HER) signed near the head with no such spatial component. Signers may also use more initialized signs (i.e., using the fingerspelled first letter of an English word on a base ASL sign) such as the letter "D" for DESCRIBE, "I" for INSTRUCTOR and "R" for RABBIT.

The use of prepositions is another area where contact sign and ASL differ. ASL uses spatial referencing and classifiers to establish the relationship of objects one to another, while English uses prepositions such as *next to*, *under*, *on*, *beside*, and so forth. ASL signs do exist to represent these concepts, but they are not used frequently in an ASL utterance. Signers who use signs for prepositions rather than establishing relational objects in space are often using a contact variety of signed language rather than ASL (Lucas & Valli 1992: 11).

The frequency of fingerspelling is a feature that also assists in identifying contact signing. Davis (1989) notes that fingerspelling is a way to represent the orthography of English, but the appearance of fingerspelling itself is not sufficient to determine that a text is a contact variety of language, since fingerspelling is also an integral part of ASL. ASL uses lexicalized fingerspelling, often referred to as "fingerspelled loan signs" (Battison 1978), where the combination of handshapes becomes an actual sign and the overall phonological form is a much reduced version of the fingerspelled word (e.g., #CAR, #BACK, #BANK).[1] The use of fingerspelling in contact sign is instead often marked by fully formed handshapes to represent letters. The occurrence of words that are not usually fingerspelled in ASL can help to identify contact signing, but as mentioned, the presence of fingerspelling alone is not sufficient to classify a language sample as a contact variety.

One of the clearest markers of contact signing is that of mouthing English words. Lucas and Valli (1992) note this as a central feature. ASL also incorporates some mouthing, although it is typically reduced (Davis 1989). An example of mouthing in ASL is the mouth movement that accompanies the sign FINISH, which is a reduced form that clearly originates in the English word *finish*. The mouthing found in contact signing differs from that in ASL in that it is usually fully produced and continues consistently throughout the text.

The combination of ASL and English features that characterize contact signing will vary from text to text because there is no one standard form of contact sign. The features described here, however, are useful in assisting the transliterator or interpreter in determining the mix of features needed to produce a target message comprehensible to the Deaf audience.

As well as identifying the features of contact sign, it is necessary to consider the various reasons for its existence within the Deaf community, along with social judgments often made about its use. These factors influence the members of the Deaf community and subsequently affect transliterators working with contact signers.

2.2 Why does contact sign exist?

A number of factors have led to the existence of contact sign within the Deaf community. First, the majority of Deaf people have had the experience of growing up with parents who are hearing, and who often have not signed to their children. As a result, these Deaf children have had to rely on some form of English to communicate in the home. Second, Deaf children who have Deaf parents do acquire ASL as a first language, but some are educated in a mainstreamed setting using a sign system developed to make visible the grammatical structures and features of English. Third, for those Deaf children who acquire ASL at residential schools, it is usually acquired from peers during social interaction, while the system used for educational purposes is often some form of English-like signing (Lucas & Valli 1992). The historic lack of recognition of ASL as a full, natural language has meant that only recently have some schools used it as the language of instruction and offered opportunities for students to study it. Consequently, the majority of Deaf adults have been educated by teachers and interpreters using a manual code intended to represent English.

These systems, broadly referred to as Manually Coded English, include such methods as Seeing Essential English (SEE 1), Signing Exact English (SEE 2), Signed English and Conceptually Accurate Signed English. SEE 2 has been the most widely used in the United States (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan 1996).[2]

Many Deaf people have the ability to shift between ASL and contact signing that incorporates features of English, although their language of preference is ASL. There are some Deaf people who differentiate the variety of signing they use depending on the setting. They may use ASL for social interaction, and prefer a more English-based sign interpretation in professional settings or for educational purposes. As one respondent explained in a survey regarding transliteration, conducted in 2000, "I want to learn the language my (hearing) peers are using so that I can respond in-kind. If I reply using their language, my peers know that I understand them. It also lessens any negative perceptions they may have about my ability to function with hearing people" (Viera & Stauffer 2000: 90–91).

Deaf people will often make a shift from ASL into contact sign in order to facilitate communication with hearing people who are not fluent in ASL. Even if a hearing person is a near-native ASL signer, a Deaf person may shift to more English-like signing upon realizing that the person can hear, often unconsciously (Lucas & Valli 1992). In this case, Deaf people's experience of interacting with hearing people has often led them to respond automatically by shifting to contact sign whenever conversing with hearing people.

Another factor in the development of contact varieties of signed language concerns people who learned English as a first language before experiencing a hearing loss. These people's use of sign is profoundly influenced by their first language, and most prefer to use English modified for visual, rather than auditory, presentation. Lucas and Valli even suggest that the earliest historical manifestation of contact signing may have begun with late-deafened signers. They state in their discussion of the earliest

studies of signed language in the United States, beginning with the establishment of the American School for the Deaf in 1817, that "contact signing didn't incorporate features of English necessarily because the hearing people couldn't understand ASL. It might have incorporated features of English because the first language of some of its users *was* English, even though they were now learning ASL" (Lucas & Valli 1992: 14; italics theirs).

A further influencing factor on the use of contact sign is that a number of Deaf people are educated in mainstreamed settings without access to an ASL-signing Deaf community. Public Law 94–142, passed in the United States in 1975, mandates public education in the "least restrictive environment", which has been interpreted to mean Deaf students being placed in their local public school, rather than re-locating to attend a program specifically designed for them (Stewart, Schein, & Cartwright 2004: 166). While Canada does not have the same legislation, similar practices are followed which result in students often having little or no contact with the larger Deaf community throughout their childhood educational experiences. Upon reaching adulthood, many of these Deaf people begin to interact in the ASL-signing Deaf community and often develop a contact variety of language that incorporates features of both the English-based code used in their education and features of ASL which they acquire through their community interactions.

A final reason for the existence of contact signing, it has been suggested, is that it "serves to prevent significant intrusions of dominant language patterns into a Deaf community, and that it, therefore, functions as a device for maintaining an ethnic boundary between hearing and deaf people" (Burns, Matthews, & Nolan-Conroy 2001: 192). That is, members of the Deaf community preserve their identity through reserving their language, ASL, for use among themselves.

Having identified some of the features present in contact sign, let us next consider several studies of contact signing and their implications for transliterators.

2.3 Studies of contact signing

Among the studies of contact signing there are two studies particularly instructive for transliterators which I will address briefly. One is a study conducted by Sam Supalla (1991), which considered whether the structure of a spoken language could be incorporated successfully into a signed message. Supalla studied a group of SEE 2 signers who had only been exposed to SEE 2, to see "whether children exposed exclusively to SEE 2 produce signing with a grammatical system similar to that of SEE 2 or with a devised grammatical system more like that of a natural signed language (similar to, though not precisely like, that of ASL)" (1991: 91). Supalla was interested in how the children marked subject versus object, hypothesizing that they would use spatial devices to indicate these relations, and that the devices would have to have been developed by the children themselves since they did not know ASL. He studied eight children, ages 9 to 11, who had no exposure to ASL at home or in any educational program.

Specifically, Supalla analyzed the devices used to mark tense and case (e.g., *he*, *him*). SEE 2 adds tense markers to verbs in a manner similar to how English marks tense, such as adding the marker -ED for past tense on the end of a signed verb. It also has specific lexical items for case-marked terms such as *he* and *him*, while ASL assigns spatial locations to each and indexes these to indicate the case.

Supalla's findings indicate that "SEE 2's non-spatial grammatical devices were replaced with essentially spatial ones" (1991: 101). Even though the children's SEE 2 model did not include spatial modifications, the children produced them. These results suggest that the children spontaneously converted a system devised to manually and visually represent English into a system that took more advantage of the visual and spatial modality.

Another study that is instructive in the consideration of contact sign in the Deaf community was that conducted by Lucas and Valli (1992). They were interested in examining linguistic and sociolinguistic features of contact signing. To that end, Lucas and Valli studied the language patterns of six dyads of white signers, and four dyads and two triads of black signers. The participants (or "informants") in the study had a mixture of backgrounds. Some had Deaf parents, some hearing parents, and some had attended residential schools while others attended day programs. Participants grouped in each dyad or triad were strangers to each other. They were brought into an interview situation and videotaped throughout (with their knowledge and consent). Each group began conversing and then after some time a Deaf interviewer entered and began asking the participants questions. The interviewer was then called away on the pretext of an emergency, and the participants were instructed to continue their discussion. After 8 to 10 minutes, a hearing interviewer arrived and took the Deaf interviewer's place for a time. Then the hearing interviewer left, ostensibly to check on the Deaf interviewer, and the dyad or triad were left alone again until the Deaf interviewer returned and completed the interview.

Lucas and Valli had assumed that "Deaf native ASL signers would produce ASL with other Deaf native ASL signers, being either the Deaf interviewer or the other informant" (1992: 62). While they did indeed find that the Deaf people used ASL with each other and contact sign with the hearing interviewer, they also found to their surprise that some Deaf ASL native users employed contact signing when no hearing people were present, some used ASL with the hearing interviewer, and sometimes as many as three different participants used three different modes simultaneously (Lucas & Valli 1992: 63). It is evident that the choice to use contact sign, even among Deaf participants with ASL as their first language, was affected by a number of complex sociolinguistic factors. For example, the formality of an interview setting, Lucas and Valli suggest, led some participants to use contact sign instead of ASL. Others appeared to use ASL consistently to establish their identity as true members of the Deaf cultural group.

Lucas and Valli's study highlights the complex nature of contact sign use within the Deaf community, and that various factors are at play when a Deaf person determines, however consciously or unconsciously, what form of language to use. This is an

important point for transliterators to consider when determining what variety of language they might use that best suits the Deaf person they are working with.

An interesting corollary to this study is the variability in Deaf viewers' assessments of the language samples in the videotapes. Lucas and Valli asked a group of viewers to watch clips from the study and determine if they were clearly ASL or not. Those who had studied ASL formally, either as linguists or teachers of ASL, had a high degree of agreement. However, naive judges without a metalinguistic awareness of ASL differed from the more aware group of judges. Valli and Lucas reason that, at least in part, "the disagreement in judgments has to do with the status of language in the Deaf community" (1992: 72). They suggest that many adult Deaf ASL signers, who are competent users of the language, have a difficult time distinguishing between ASL and contact signing as a result of no formal education being provided for them to study their language during their schooling.

Lucas and Valli's study highlights the complexity of contact varieties of language in use within the Deaf community. They note that individuals vary in the ways they combine features of ASL and English in producing a message characterized by contact signing. There is no single standard structure for these contact varieties of language. Signers draw from both English and ASL to create individual blends of language features. Additionally, some Deaf people shift between using ASL and a contact variety depending on the setting. These findings are important for transliterators in determining what their own target language output should consist of to best meet the needs of individual Deaf consumers. These considerations are addressed later in the chapter, but for now let us turn our attention to how transliteration is defined, and how it is conceptualized within the broader field of signed language interpretation.

3. Efforts to define transliteration

Most interpreters, at some point in their careers, are asked to transliterate, although the Deaf person often does not use that specific term. Instead, the interpreter may simply be asked to sign in English word order or to mouth more of the English source message. As Kelly (2001) describes in her text on transliterating, Deaf people would request of her to "show me the English" (2001: xi). In the United States, RID offers a test for certification in transliteration, and the term is used throughout the RID Code of Ethics. Given that this service is requested, it would seem logical to work from a commonly understood definition of the term.

However, the term "transliteration" continues to elude a standardized, unambiguous definition, although it is used as if one were commonly understood. While the term is not used as frequently in Canadian literature, we are nonetheless affected by American policies and practices due to our geographic proximity and the use of American research and publications, and thus could also benefit from such a common understanding.

Several definitions for transliteration have been proposed. Humphrey and Alcorn define transliterating as "the process of taking a message and expressing it in a different form of the *same* language" (2001: 7.6). They note that while the modality may change from auditory to visual, only one language is involved.

AVLIC's original Code of Ethics, which was ratified in 1983, defines a transliterator in its preamble as "one who facilitates communication between persons who share the same language but not the same language mode". The current AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct, ratified in 2000, makes no explicit reference to the term "transliteration" whatsoever. Instead, under Section 2.1 of the code, entitled "Qualification to Practice", it is noted that members work with a variety of consumers, and that they must be able to meet the linguistic needs of these consumers. Assumed in this statement is the reality of the range of communication options which interpreters will encounter within the Deaf community.

Siple (1997) points out that definitions of transliterating, while changing somewhat over time, have retained certain fundamental features. Siple discusses a more current, and widely used, definition taken from Frishberg (1986), which states that it is "the process of changing an English text into Manually Coded English (or vice versa)" (1986: 19).[3] RID's most recent attempt to define transliteration refers to Winston (1989), who also cites Frishberg (1986) but elaborates the process (discussed in some detail below in Section 4).

The term "transliteration" has also been used to describe the processes that occur when using systems such as Cued Speech and oral interpreting. Those using Cued Speech or oral interpreting to render a target message experience some similar cognitive challenges to those of the transliterator working between English and contact sign, but they are not faced with choosing which features of ASL and which of English to combine to create the target language message, and it is this challenge which is addressed specifically throughout this chapter.

In Canada, the term "transliteration" is not widely used by interpreters, educators of the Deaf or members of the Deaf community, but as mentioned, literature from the United States references it frequently, and for this reason it is familiar to Canadians in the field. None of the interpreter preparation programs in Canada use it in their course descriptions, and the AVLIC Test of Interpretation does not specifically test transliterating skills. The Program of Sign Language Interpretation at Douglas College, New Westminster, British Columbia, instead uses the term "interpreting into a contact variety". However, given that much of the existing literature does use "transliteration", I will continue to refer to it in this chapter and then address its usage in Section 8 which discusses some recommendations.

The definitions of transliteration cited above emphasize that the language being used is consistently English, and that only the form or modality changes. Transliterating that strives to represent all features of the English source (for example, including tense markers and gender specific pronouns) may be best conceived of as a form of transcoding, and it may therefore be that the above definitions that stipulate two modes of the same language most accurately reflect that process. However, studies

that analyze actual transliterating samples, while few in number, point to the fact that the transliterator incorporates features of *both* English and ASL, and is constantly deciding which combination of features will most readily convey meaning to the Deaf consumer (Winston 1989; Siple 1993, 1996). Thus, definitions focusing only on the modality change (i.e., two modes of the same language) are insufficient in addressing how incorporation of ASL features takes place.

4. Research on transliteration

The first attempt to outline the tasks necessary for transliterating took place at the 1984 gathering of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers in Asilomar, California.[4] Educators of interpreters sought to better understand the tasks inherent in both interpreting and transliterating, with the goal of more successfully teaching these skills. Participants who were engaged in the analysis highlighted the challenges of transliterating due to the lack of a standardized form of English-like signing (McIntire 1986: 94). They noted that in order to ensure that the target message makes sense, the transliterator often adjusts her output so her signing is more like ASL and less like English (1986: 95). They also commented that transliterating often requires the use of a number of processing strategies to be successful, that is, some information may need to be omitted due to the temporal pressure of attempting to convey every English word into a signed form. Articles, for example, are usually deleted, as are redundancies. As well, modulations of many ASL verbs may make it possible to omit some English words from the target text. For example, in a sentence such as *I helped him*, when the referent "him" has previously been established in visual space, the verb HELP can be signed moving from the signer towards the spatial referent, thus eliminating the need for a specific sign for "him".

Additions form another category of changes which can be found in the transliterated target language message. Cokely (1992) used the term "addition" in his discussion of interpreting to refer to certain miscues that occur, but the term is typically used differently in transliteration.[5] The additions present in transliterating clarify the intent when simply conveying the English word into contact sign would not. An example is the English phrase *when we bring young and old together*, when the transliterator adds the sign PEOPLE (i.e., YOUNG AND OLD PEOPLE) to clarify what is meant (Kelly 2001: 25).

Winston (1989) notes the use of some of these features in her study of the output of a transliterator working with a Deaf student in a university class. The student was an English-based signer in the process of learning ASL, who wanted the signed message to employ semantically accurate ASL signs while also retaining the structure of English. Winston analyzed the transliteration of a lecture, and noted some strategies used to create a clear message: sign choice, addition, omission, restructuring and mouthing. Each of these categories is described briefly below.

Winston's first category, sign choice, involves the selection of signed vocabulary that conveys the meaning of an English lexical item rather than a gloss which matches

the English lexical item but does not convey the appropriate meaning for a conceptual interpretation of that source message.[6] An example often cited is the word *run*. The ASL sign, glossed as RUN, has the meaning 'to run' as in track and field, but it does not convey the meaning of water running, a run in a stocking, or running a meeting. An interpreter who heard a sentence using the word *run*, with the meaning of 'running a meeting', would select a different ASL lexical item to convey the intent, rather than the sign glossed as RUN.

Winston (1989: 155) cites the following examples using the English word *got*, and suggests how they would be signed differently if meaning is the intent of the transliterator.

(1) a. I got sick → BECOME
b. She got hit → Something HIT her
c. They got there → ARRIVE
d. I got it (I understand) → UNDERSTAND

These examples illustrate that transliterating is more than either a process of transcoding or simply a change in modality, but rather requires the analysis of intent similar to the analysis required when interpreting between English and ASL.

In instances of addition, Winston found times when the transliterator provided a more conceptual sign before or after a literal interpretation. She cites an example where the English phrase *don't want* is rendered as a two-sign phrase DON'T WANT followed by the ASL form of the verb with negative incorporation, DON'T-WANT. As mentioned earlier, this type of addition in transliteration refers to information added to the source language message in order to clarify the intent. The use of space, a prominent ASL feature, is another type of addition occurring in the transliteration. Winston found as well that facial expressions are used to assist in clarification of the message. For example, the transliterator in Winston's study signed SELF RESPECT with an expression of pride and an expanded chest (1989: 160).

Winston also found instances of restructuring, where the transliterator would change the order of items in the message to increase the clarity. When Winston asked the transliterator why she restructured, she was unable to state explicitly which features of English prompted her to do so, but felt that the message, if preserved in its exact English form, "would not provide a clear visual message when recoded in the target form" (1989: 162).

Finally, Winston looked at the use of mouthing. Of significance is that at times the transliterator mouthed the source English word but chose a different target sign that more conceptually matched the meaning.

Winston's study documents a sample of transliteration that includes many features of ASL along with features of English retained from the source text. This study provides evidence that transliterating involves message analysis: "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" (Winston 1989: 163).

How pauses in the source message are used in constructing a transliterated target message was investigated by Siple (1993). Siple studied twenty interpreters who transliterated an eleven-minute monologue produced with normal pausing in the speech stream, and then asked them to transliterate the same passage, this time produced with random and incorrectly placed pauses. Siple was interested in studying how these interpreters would show auditory pauses in a visual form. Would the pausing pattern of the source text be reproduced in the target message, even when the pauses occurred at unnatural moments and created difficulty in comprehending the message? Or would the transliterator ignore the incorrectly placed pauses and analyze the source message for its meaning, inserting pauses in the target transliteration that aided the Deaf consumer in understanding the meaning of the message?

The monologue was read and recorded twice by the same actor, once with natural inflection and an animated voice, and once with random speech pauses inserted and delivered in a monotone. There was a one-week time period between transliterating the first text and the second. The transliterators were asked to imagine they were producing the target text for the same Deaf student for each rendition.

Siple was able to demonstrate that transliterators do insert appropriately placed pauses in their transliterations to provide overall coherence in the target message. In showing that this paralinguistic element is used meaningfully in the target message, Siple's research supports the claim that transliterating involves more than just a modality shift or a word-for-word representation. Siple notes that further research is needed regarding other paralinguistic features such as vocal stress and vocal qualities conveying emotion, and how these also might affect the process of transliterating.

Winston and Monikowski (2003) also considered pausing, in both interpreting and transliterating. They compared the work of three interpreters who worked from the same English source text, interpreting it into ASL and transliterating it into contact sign. They found that the transliteration did indeed incorporate ASL prosodic features, such as the "use of space for sentence boundaries, lengthened final holds for signs, and head and torso shifting" (2003: 189). Winston and Monikowski emphasize that ASL prosodic features are required for a dynamically equivalent transliteration (2003: 195). They found that while pausing occurred in both the interpreted and transliterated texts, there were noticeably fewer extra-linguistic pauses (pauses where the interpreter or transliterator clasped hands and appeared to be thinking) in the transliterated texts. Stops between segments were significantly shorter, even to the point of being nearly imperceptible, and a question raised for further discussion is whether this leads to difficulty for the viewer in identifying major boundary shifts in the text. The researchers note the need for further study, with the goal of ensuring that transliteration is ultimately comprehensible.

Another study of transliterating that set out to compare Deaf students' comprehension of college-level material when presented via interpreting or transliterating is Livingston, Singer and Abrahamson (1994). Livingston et al. presented both narrative and lecture material to 43 Deaf college students, who were divided into groups based on whether they stated a preference for interpretation into ASL or transliteration

into a contact variety. The students were also grouped according to level of education. Matched groups then watched both a narrative presentation and a lecture, either interpreted or transliterated, and subsequently were tested for comprehension. The results showed that even students who stated a preference for a more English-like target text scored better when receiving the message in ASL.

In discussing their findings, the researchers comment that "the characteristics of ASL and some of the strategies employed by ASL interpreters are basic to visual/spatial language – that even being perhaps somewhat unfamiliar with ASL did not preclude understanding it; and that in fact the unique characteristics of the language and the way it was interpreted served to clarify concepts and make them more memorable for English-preferring students" (Livingston et al. 1994: 34). These findings support those of Supalla (1991) noted above, and suggest that transliterating, even when requested, will be more successful when incorporating features of ASL such as the use of space and directional verbs, as well as employing strategies such as addition and restructuring as noted by Winston.

Livingston et al. ultimately comment that "transliteration is interpretation that has not gone far enough" (1994: 39). By this they mean that when the transliterator attempts to retain the exact form of the source language text, this restricts the transliterator from employing features of ASL which tend to make the target text more easily understood in terms of its visual and spatial form. Livingston et al. thus encourage transliterators to make use of these features of ASL, and to not concentrate on retaining every aspect of the source text form.

Another study of note is Siple's (1996) study which builds on Winston's work on the use of addition when transliterating. Siple analyzed the work of fifteen interpreters who were interpreting for an imagined audience of Deaf consumers that they knew preferred a more English-like transliteration.

Siple noted five types of information added to the target language production that were not found in the source message, but which served to make the source message more comprehensible visually and spatially. The first type of addition she found had to do with cohesion, serving to link different parts of the discourse, such as conjunctions and spatial referencing. The second were additions for clarity, which were attempts to reduce ambiguity, such as by providing additional semantic information and stating something explicitly that the source text implied. Siple also found instances of "modality adaptation", which referred to information that was originally conveyed auditorially, such as intonation, subsequently conveyed in the target message visually. There were also instances of repetition which provided emphasis. Reduplication, a grammatical feature of ASL, was used in the transliteration to indicate pluralization.

Sofinski (2002) built on the work of Lucas and Valli by examining a signed narrative which combined features of ASL and of English. He details the types of English mouthing that were present: full English mouthing, where a complete English lexical item or phrase could be viewed on the mouth; reduced English mouthing, where part of the English lexical item or phrase was present; lexicalized mouthing, whereby the original English mouthing has been modified to co-occur with

a particular ASL sign; and mouthed adverbials (such as CHA, MM or CS) (2002: 37). Of particular interest was the co-occurrence of these features, that is, mouthed English while ASL is presented in the "manual channel". Sofinski comments that "many people base their perception of a product as being more 'English-like' or more 'ASL-like' on the features contained within the oral and manual channels because these channels are where they can most readily find the 'most clear evidence' of an English influence, often paying little attention to the existence of simultaneously co-occurring ASL features" (2002: 46). This study flags an important consideration for interpreters in their analysis of a Deaf person's language use and the resulting language production required by the interpreter.

Another recent study examining the mix of ASL and English features in interpretation is found in Davis (2003). Davis looked at the output of four certified interpreters in order to describe the cross-linguistic transfer from English during an interpretation into ASL. Similarly to Sofinski, Davis notes the potential to utilize both the oral/aural and visual/gestural channels of communication, and does indeed find examples of such combinations in the interpreting samples studied. He notes that the four interpreters whose work was analyzed alternated between ASL mouthing patterns, "lexicalized" lip movements and English that was clearly articulated although not auditory. In addition, Davis notes the use of fingerspelling as another example of cross-linguistic transfer.

The research on transliterating cited above shares a common thread, which is the recognition that transliterating, or interpreting into a contact variety of signed language, still involves the use of ASL features. This means that, essentially, transliterators need to know ASL. Additionally, the research points us towards a deeper understanding of the complex process which an interpreter must undertake to successfully produce a message in contact sign. Interpreting into ASL requires the interpreter to understand and convey the meaning of a source text, while transliterating strives to represent both meaning *and* the source language form. Further research, however, is needed to better clarify this process for the interpreter or transliterator striving to produce a meaningful message in a contact variety of signed language. This includes research into what contributes to the unique mixture of ASL and English features in each individual's use of contact signing, as well as studies on community attitudes towards the use of contact sign. In addition, further study is needed to more fully understand the complex decision-making strategies available to the transliterator.

5. Challenges of transliteration

In this section, some of the challenges that interpreters face when working into contact signing are addressed. Here, I primarily use the term "interpreter" with the understanding that whether the target text is produced in ASL or in a contact variety of signed language, both involve at least some similar cognitive processing. As well, the same individual may find herself working with consumers who have quite different

language preferences, so that we cannot assume that "interpreters" only work into (and out of) ASL while "transliterators" only work with contact varieties.

5.1 Assessing consumer needs

One of the first challenges facing the interpreter is to determine the correct mix of ASL and English features that a particular Deaf person employs and understands so that she can match this in her target language message. For example, a person who became deaf later in life, and has only begun to learn ASL, may emphasize the importance of following English word order and mouthing English words, while a Deaf person who uses ASL for most social interactions, but who has requested that the interpreter use contact sign for an employment-related training seminar, may prefer that the interpreter's target text incorporates the use of space and classifiers found in ASL along with fingerspelled technical terms. Thus the interpreter is constantly balancing the need to represent the form of the English source text along with incorporating ASL features in conveying the message in a visual and spatial language.

In their formal education, interpreters learn to assess the language preferences of the Deaf consumer in order to determine whether the most appropriate interpretation should be in ASL or a contact variety of signed language. If the preference is determined to be a contact variety, the interpreter must further decide what that particular variety should look like – for example, how much fingerspelling, how much to mouth the source English words while articulating semantically accurate signs, and so forth. In making these assessments, interpreters must consider the following factors.

Upon meeting a Deaf person at an assignment and introducing herself, the interpreter begins to get a sense of the Deaf person's language use. However, many Deaf people will code-switch to a more English-like form of signing when meeting a new hearing person. As discussed in Section 2.2 above, such code-switching often takes place unconsciously as a result of years of interacting with hearing people who cannot understand them when they use ASL. Armed with this knowledge, interpreters commonly use the strategy of continuing to sign in ASL, to see if the Deaf person begins to use more ASL as she realizes the interpreter can understand her. Sometimes, a Deaf person will continue to sign her own discourse using a contact variety, but comprehend other people's discourse more easily when it is produced in ASL. Interpreters must therefore be prepared to incorporate a range of both ASL and English features, attempting to match the Deaf person's specific language use, and watching for subtle signs of comfort on the Deaf person's part that indicate ease of comprehension (for example, a more relaxed body posture, less obvious straining to try to use unfamiliar signs, head nodding or other facial gestures that indicate comprehension, etc.).

Some Deaf people state clearly what their preference is, and yet even this specific kind of direction can be problematic for the interpreter when considering the variety of language she should be using. Burns et al. (2001) cite the study in Lucas and Valli (1989)[7] in noting that "the choice of varieties 'other than ASL', and the view that ASL is

not appropriate for certain situations, are the direct result of a sociolinguistic situation in which ASL has been suppressed, and in which the focus has traditionally been on the instruction and use of spoken and signed English" (Burns et al. 2001: 193). This sometimes results in Deaf people stating they want an interpretation into a signed form of English, even though the meaning is not actually as accessible to them as it would be in ASL. One personal experience involved a Deaf woman who told me she did not know the "old signs", she only knew the "new ones". As we continued to converse prior to the interpreted event, I realized that by "new signs" she meant the use of many initialized signs which she had been taught in school, but in fact the grammatical features of her signing were more heavily influenced by ASL than English.

More recently, the converse of the above situation has begun to appear. With the increase in awareness of ASL as a complete language, capable of fulfilling all the functions for which language is used, and with the growth of pride in Deaf culture and identity, some Deaf students entering college are now instructing coordinators of interpreting services that they require ASL interpretation. Marna Arnell, facilitator of the Interpreting Services Project in British Columbia, Canada, has noted that once the interpreters begin to work with these students, however, they realize that in fact, the students have been educated orally and are very new signers, comprehending a contact variety of signed language better than a strict ASL interpretation (Marna Arnell, personal communication, May 2000). Their desire to identify with the Deaf community leads these students to represent themselves as ASL users.

5.2 Attitudinal barriers

As stated above, attitudes within the Deaf community itself can lead to confusion when a Deaf person is describing her language use and preferences. Attitudinal factors do not only affect Deaf people however; interpreters and transliterators are also affected. It appears that in the past, interpreters have sometimes reflected the thinking of the dominant hearing community that ASL is not a full language and thus that more English-like signing has been preferred, an observation made by numerous experienced interpreter educators (Jan Humphrey, Risa Shaw, Debra Russell, personal communication). Currently however, interpreting programs in Canada concentrate on teaching ASL and developing the abilities of students to interpret between ASL and English. As students in these ASL-oriented programs struggle to gain mastery of the interpreting process, they often receive feedback that they retain too much of the form of the source language (i.e., English) in their interpretation, or have not expressed the idea in the most easily understood way in ASL, thus they work even harder to use ASL well.

Having received this kind of feedback repeatedly, it is difficult for the student to then attempt to deliberately *maintain* the English form and to mouth English words along with their sign choices. Students at Douglas College, British Columbia, report feeling concerned that their Deaf ASL teachers will see them practicing this and think that the students are not respecting the wishes of the Deaf community to use ASL.

Students also report fearing that the abilities they have mastered in interpreting from English into ASL will be lost when they practice interpreting into a contact variety.

It is important for educators of interpreters to address these concerns, and assist students in recognizing that their goal must be the development of control over the interpreting process, so that the product, or target message, will be an appropriate match for Deaf consumers with different language preferences. Specific suggestions for educators are addressed in Section 6 below.

Occasionally an underlying attitudinal issue is apparent when students and professional interpreters alike have decided that signing in a more English-like fashion is undesirable, or is not as valued as interpreting into ASL, and this attitude must be challenged within the profession as a whole. Some examples of this type of negative reaction on the part of interpreters are reported in Viera and Stauffer (2000). They conducted a survey of consumers of transliteration and received 61 responses to the 80 surveys sent out (two respondents were from Canada and the remainder from the United States). Respondents reported that when requesting transliteration, some of the reactions they received included being asked incredulously by a certified interpreter, "You want everything?", while another signed and said, "I know you want me to mouth the words while I sign like this" with greatly exaggerated mouth movements (Viera & Stauffer 2000: 84).

These responses demonstrate either that the interpreter lacked an understanding of what was being requested, lacked the ability to match the request, or lacked respect for a Deaf consumer's language preferences. It is difficult to determine whether these two reported instances reflect a deficit in skill alone or also include attitudinal resistance to the request. However, the following example clearly shows profound attitudinal resistance.

Jean Teets, a Deaf woman in the United States who is very clear in her requirement for transliterating that follows English word order, recounts an incident where she requested that the interpreter work into an English-like form. In her videotaped narrative, she recounts that the interpreter replied, "Shame on you! Don't you know that ASL is your natural language?" (Teets 1989). It should be evident to every interpreter and transliterator that this kind of judgmental response to a consumer's request is unacceptable.

No matter how strongly interpreters support the Deaf community's struggle for recognition, language rights, and the need for ASL to be used as the language of instruction in schools, it is crucial that they also respect consumers' choices and produce a transliteration, or contact sign interpretation, if that is the wish of the individual. It is not the interpreter's right to place judgment on the Deaf person's language choices. Rather, the need is for an accurate assessment of the consumer's language choice, along with the skills and flexibility that allow the interpreter to control the target language message she produces to match the preference of the Deaf consumer.

Still, Deaf consumers who request transliteration can create challenges for interpreters by the descriptions they do use. As Stauffer and Viera note, consumer expec-

tations may or may not be realistic in terms of what transliterators can and cannot do (Stauffer & Viera 2000). Stauffer and Viera's survey of consumers requesting transliteration revealed that some consumers described their needs and preferences in the following ways. One said that the preferred transliteration should be "verbatim, word-for-word transliteration. . .and that they should mouth and fingerspell (to the best of their ability) those words for which they do not know the sign equivalent" (Viera & Stauffer 2000: 91). Another suggested a preference for a "Signed English interpreter with good lip movement. No ASL allowed" (2000: 91).

These statements can present a quandary to the interpreter. Meaningful transliteration typically includes some elements of ASL, as demonstrated by the research cited earlier in this chapter, so requests for a "verbatim" interpretation or instructions to not use ASL pose a challenge. It could be that a verbatim rendition is possible, if the speaker's pace and the content of the text are such that the interpreter is able to keep up. In addition, if the speaker is willing to pause frequently, the interpreter may be able to closely follow the form of the source message. Many times, though, including numerous manual markers that indicate the English forms of tense, gender, pluralization and so forth requires too much time for the interpreter's target message to consistently mirror the form of the source message.

Some consumers making such requests may not be aware of the features of ASL that can be present when transliterating, and which greatly assist in the delivery of a signed message that makes sense. The interpreter needs to pay careful attention to the requests of her consumers and strive to incorporate the elements of the English form they prefer, while also determining which features of ASL will benefit the overall clarity of the interpreted message. Ultimately, interpreters need the skill to manage their interpreting process so as to produce ASL or a variety of contact sign as is called for, the wisdom to determine what the appropriate target form should be, and the respect to comply with consumer requests.

6. Preparing interpreters to work into contact varieties of signed language

The goal for signed language interpreters must be the development of control over their interpreting process, so that the product, or target message, will be an appropriate match for the Deaf consumer. No matter what her political beliefs and alignment to the ASL-using Deaf community may be, the interpreter needs to respect the language choices of every Deaf individual for whom she interprets, and it is clear that there are Deaf people who prefer or require a contact variety of signed language.

Currently, the skills to transliterate, or interpret into a contact variety of signed language, are not addressed in any depth in interpreter preparation programs in Canada. Programs concentrate rather on preparing students to interpret between English and ASL, and vary in the amount of time they have to complete the task (from two to four years). In some cases, students complete a language and culture acquisition program prior to entry into the interpreting program. For example, the majority of

students entering the Douglas College Program of Sign Language Interpretation, a two-year program, have completed a ten-month, full-time program in ASL and Deaf Studies at Vancouver Community College.

Even with this strong foundation in place, students tend to be relatively new language learners when they enter their interpreting program, and are in the position of continuing to learn one of their working languages while they are also learning to interpret. Their interpretation into ASL thus may often include English-like forms because of their incomplete mastery of their second language.[8] In addition, students struggling to master the complex cognitive tasks required for simultaneous interpreting will often produce more English-like interpretations due to their inability to process the meaning without considering the form of the source language.

Thus programs concentrate on strengthening the ASL-English interpreting skills of their students, and transliterating skills are not taught. In my recent conversations with faculty at programs in Canada on this topic, a common theme arose: contact varieties are acknowledged within the program, but are not specifically addressed.[9] Faculty members do address the topic of language variety within the Deaf community and the necessity of adjusting the interpretation to meet the needs of different consumers, however. Additionally, Deaf models representing a range of usage along the language continuum are employed for class practice, but as mentioned, specific instruction in transliterating skills is not offered.

Time constraint is not the only barrier to transliterating skills being taught in interpreting programs. There seems to be a prevailing belief among both some program instructors and working interpreters that interpreting into a contact variety of signed language is easy, since interpreters already know English. In the past, interpreters have often produced messages that retained much of the English form, perhaps due to a historic lack of training in ASL and an improperly sequenced education in interpretation. My own belief too when I began teaching interpreting in 1988 was that interpreting into a contact variety was easy. It was what I had naively done at the start of my own interpreting career before I learned more ASL and received instruction in the process of interpreting. Campbell McDermid, an instructor in the George Brown College ASL-English Interpretation Program, who similarly entered the field in the 1980s, echoes much the same sentiment (Campbell McDermid, personal communication). Interpreters who have supervised Douglas College students on practicum have reported, impatiently at times, that the students simply do not use enough English features in their target texts when requested to do so by Deaf consumers. The impatience underlying their comments leads me to believe that they, as well, assume that conveying the form of the source language should be an easy task, one that students at that stage should not have difficulty accomplishing.

However, interpreting students consistently report that they do *not* find it easy to make the transition from interpreting into ASL to interpreting into a contact variety. Their education has taught them to disregard the form of the source message and wait for meaning. ASL instructors have also repeatedly emphasized the need to decrease the amount of mouthing English words. When unable to make sense of the

message, students are taught to wait a short time longer until they do understand, and while practicing, if it is impossible to keep up with the pace of the speaker when working simultaneously, to convey at least the main points. It seems contradictory to these students then to stay close to the source language structure and to convey the form while mouthing English words, even if at times it means that they are not comprehending the speaker's point.

Interpreting into a contact variety of signed language in fact requires the interpreter to attend to both the meaning and the form. Interpreters will usually shorten their process time to retain the form of the source message, that is, they will process at the lexical or phrasal level. However, they must still monitor the overall message to ensure that meaning is conveyed in their target text. This means they are still considering what the speaker's point of view and goals are, as well as connecting what is being said with what the speaker has said previously and mentally predicting what the speaker may address next.

Interpreters need to make quick decisions regarding whether or not the English source text needs to be restructured using certain ASL features in order for the target text to make sense. But knowing ASL and having skills in English-ASL interpreting are not enough. In Viera and Stauffer's survey of Deaf consumers requesting transliteration, almost 100% of the respondents agreed that someone who can interpret into ASL is not automatically able to transliterate (2000: 93). The interpreting skills needed to work between English and ASL form a necessary building block for successful transliteration, but they are not a guarantee of that ability.

Given that the time students spend in interpreting programs is brief, it may not be possible for programs to prepare students both to interpret from English to ASL and into a contact variety of signed language. However, programs can address the range of contact sign that exists within the community by inviting Deaf models to class who use a contact variety to communicate. Students also need to be educated regarding the role of contact sign within the larger Deaf community. Even simply stating that transliterating does not imply a sign-for-word transcoding can be enlightening to students.

It is useful for students to watch the same person first interpret and then transliterate the same text in order to demonstrate that it is a reasonable expectation for interpreters to be able to vary the language form of the target message. Students can also attempt signing in English word order, mouthing English words and using semantically accurate signs, so they at least have some preliminary idea of what they need to do mentally in order to eventually produce a transliteration. Class activities where students alternate between interpreting into ASL and interpreting into a contact variety are a useful way to help students gain a sense of the difference between the two, and to begin to control their output.

Ultimately, the skills required to produce quality transliteration could easily take a full semester course meeting three hours per week, although given the limited time available in interpreter education programs currently, programs may not be able to do this. At least some time, however, should be allotted for an introduction to the concept

of contact varieties of signed language within the Deaf community, along with some discussion of the use of ASL features when transliterating. If this is not done, students will continue to first encounter the task of transliteration at the practicum site and on the job once they graduate, where they will be ill prepared to meet consumers' needs.

7. Certification and standards

When AVLIC was working to establish the Certificate of Interpretation (COI), the national certification implemented in 1990, a decision was reached in collaboration with the Deaf community to offer one certification only, which recognized skill in ASL-English interpretation. This contrasts with the certification offered by RID in the United States, which offers a separate Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and Certificate of Transliteration (CT). For RID, the definition of a set standard for the CT has been problematic, due to the lack of a standardized form of the target language when transliterating from English. RID has described three broad categories which are assessed during the English-to-sign portion of the test, which are grammar and vocabulary, processing, and mouth movement patterns (Friedenreich 1996: 24). Several statements regarding what successful transliteration in the test would look like demonstrate that the incorporation of ASL features is desired. These are:

- use of space for role taking (characterization)
- conceptually correct sign choices (based on meaning rather than form), and
- some additions of ASL signs which enhance the clarity of the visual message (modals such as CAN, classifier constructions, indexing and listing structures) (Friedenreich 1996: 24).

While this explanation does make it clear that a word-for-word, or even morpheme by morpheme transcoding is not expected, it is still difficult for the test taker to determine to what extent these features can be employed, with the result still considered a successful transliterating performance.

The difficulty in assessing transliterating skills lies in the non-standard form of the contact varieties of language in use. The transliteration required for an adult Deaf man who lost his hearing at the age of 20, for example, will most likely follow the English form very closely, and may include frequent fingerspelling and some sign choices that reflect source message words rather than ASL semantic features, along with consistent English mouthing, since the consumer in this case would be very familiar with English as a spoken language. This transliteration would likely be very different from that required for a culturally Deaf computer specialist who has requested transliteration at a training seminar and who is accustomed to receiving the message in a visual and spatial form, and is thus very familiar with the inherent semantics of ASL signs.

Within Canada, transliterating has not garnered the same attention it has been afforded in the United States. Supporters of sign systems designed to represent English have joined RID and sought organizational recognition for their transliterating skills,

while AVLIC has predominantly represented interpreters working between ASL and English (and for a time, LSQ[10] and French), although recall that AVLIC expects its members to attain a wide range of language skills to accommodate diverse consumers. RID has consistently provided both an interpreter and a transliterator on stage at the same time for its meetings, which has not occurred in Canada. There does not appear to be a large cohort requesting interpretation into contact varieties of signed language in Canada in the same way that exists in the United States. As well there has been no organized consumer demand for separate certification for transliteration in Canada.

Screening tools that employers use across Canada also reflect the emphasis on ASL. The screening at the Ontario Interpreter Services tests for skills in ASL-English interpretation, as does the Medical Interpreting Services screening in British Columbia. The newly developed screening for community interpreters in Edmonton and Calgary tests for ASL-English interpretation skills as well, although some of the models of Deaf people appearing in the test materials use contact signing, and test takers are expected to match the language choice of the Deaf person.

The one screening currently in use that does require demonstration of the ability to interpret from English into both ASL and into a contact variety of signed language is the Post-Secondary Screening in British Columbia. Test takers need to demonstrate the ability to maintain a sense of control over their output so that there is a clear difference between work into ASL and work into the contact variety.

It is evident that screenings and certification tests used in Canada reflect the need in the community for ASL-English interpreting skills, and that the need for testing for interpreting into a contact variety has not been widespread. I continue to support testing and certification for ASL-English skills, and also support the inclusion of language models who use a contact variety of signed language as part of the screening tools, rather than the development of a separate certification system for transliteration.

8. Recommendations

The research on transliterating suggests a common theme: quality transliterating requires the incorporation of both ASL and English features. ASL interpreting skills are required for a transliteration that conveys meaning in the target text (as opposed to a transcoding of the source language), and the interpreter must undertake cognitive processing that is fundamentally similar whether the target language is ASL or contact signing. Therefore, the field would be well served in referring to the work in this way, that is, interpreting into contact signing or a contact variety of signed language, rather than using the term "transliteration", which is ambiguously defined and poorly understood. Siple (1996) notes the reaction of interpreters when she asked them to transliterate. One described her understanding of the task in this way: "Well, there's word-for-word, and then there's what I consider to be a more effective form" (1996: 31). Without the use of the confounding term "transliteration", this interpreter may have more quickly moved to a determination of the contact variety features

best suited for the Deaf audience. As well, as Siple points out, "the perception that transliteration is simply the robotic task of assigning a sign to each word has led to a status difference between interpretation and transliteration" (1996: 30). The term "transliteration" is thus too fraught with misunderstandings and judgments.

Interpreters need education in how to approach the task of interpreting into a contact variety. Even the explanation that their goal is not to be a word-for-word, verbatim presentation is reassuring to many beginning interpreters. The importance of incorporating ASL features needs to be emphasized, along with building skill in following the source text closely in order to present aspects of the form of the source message. Drawing on the research to date, training must emphasize the decision-making process the interpreter faces in using strategies such as addition, omission, restructuring, use of semantically accurate ASL signs, and use of mouthing English words, among others.

An important concern that interpreting programs must address as they teach students to interpret into a contact variety of signed language is the potential reaction of the Deaf community. Program faculty need to affirm their support for the primacy of ASL in the Deaf community and within Deaf education. They need to work with Deaf organizations to emphasize that they are not actively supporting the use of signed English, but rather are training interpreters who can serve the needs of various members of the broader Deaf community. Programs can consult with Deaf organizations, and in a very respectful way, bring to the attention of the Deaf community that there are members of their community and organizations who prefer to interact using contact sign in certain interpreted contexts. But faculty and interpreters should bear in mind the sensitive nature of language issues within the Deaf community, the oppression of the Deaf ASL-signing community that exists to the present day, and the role that hearing people and hearing institutions have played in perpetuating it.

A personal example may prove useful in illustrating my point. As I prepared this chapter, I consulted with interpreting programs across Canada to determine what their current practices were in terms of teaching transliterating and contact signing. One Deaf ASL instructor and I became involved in a long discussion where he raised concerns that students' signed language use is already too influenced by their first language, English, and that they do not produce ASL interpretations. He also raised the issue that the Deaf community supports the recognition of ASL as the language of that community. I agreed wholeheartedly with these points, but I could see that he was not convinced that I understood him. Finally, I thought of a Deaf leader who uses contact sign and who is well respected. I was able to say, "You know X? Well, we want the students to be able to interpret for him too". Finally the Deaf person responded, "Oh, okay, if it's for X, then that's okay".

The concerns this Deaf man raised in our conversation are legitimate ones, and as a non-Deaf person, I may not be able to address such community issues on my own. It is important for Deaf faculty members in interpreter education programs who are full members of the community and are respected by other members to also speak to

these issues. It may be helpful to show samples of interpreting that achieve the desired goal, that of an interpreter (or interpreting student) who is able to adapt her output successfully for a variety of consumers' language preferences.

In Canada, AVLIC should continue to focus on certifying ASL-English interpreters. As stated earlier, a demand for separate certification of interpretation skills into contact signing has not emerged within Canada, and consumers of interpreting services are better served by a single certification process. A large number of employers of interpreters are relatively unfamiliar with ASL and the interpreting process, and are not able to determine if an "interpreter" or a "transliterator" is the most appropriate choice. Given that ASL skills are required for an interpretation into a contact variety of signed language as well, AVLIC's single certification process appears to suffice. Programs training interpreters, however, should ensure that the training includes work on interpreting into contact varieties. Finally, interpreters must also strive to demonstrate respect for Deaf people's choices of language and language varieties they use.

There is a great deal of research that could still be undertaken which would inform our understanding of contact signing and the processes required to use it successfully when interpreting. Further work building on Lucas and Valli's research, outlined above, would be instructive in identifying ways in which ASL features are incorporated into varieties of contact signing, and what features of the resulting message make it more acceptable to the ASL-using Deaf community. Further research into the sociolinguistic factors that influence an individual's use of contact signing would also be beneficial to interpreters.

More research on transliterating itself is also needed. We need to develop a common understanding of the process, whether it is called transliteration or interpreting into a contact variety of signed language, along with what cognitive processes the interpreter undertakes in producing a message characterized as contact signing. In addition, no research has yet been conducted on working from contact signing as the source text into spoken English as the target, and it would be instructive to identify the cognitive processes necessary for the interpreter to do so successfully.

Another area of research that would be useful to interpreters is that of investigating what cognitive processes take place for interpreters who can clearly distinguish between producing ASL or contact signing as appropriate target forms. Is their cognitive processing the same for each, or different? How have they learned to keep the two target forms distinct?

These research areas will serve to deepen our understanding of the role of contact signing within the Deaf community and the strategies that aid interpreters in their work with a variety of signers' language preferences. Further, such research will assist interpreter educators in preparing students to successfully meet this complex array of language usage they will encounter.

As ASL is increasingly used as the language of instruction in schools instead of systems constructed to represent English, younger generations of Deaf people may reach adulthood with a strong base in their first language without as much influence from English-based systems. Also, if interpreting programs continue to focus

on teaching students to be able to interpret fluently into ASL, with an appropriate range of register, Deaf people may gain more confidence in the accuracy of the ASL interpretation they receive, thus preferring that even the most technical information be interpreted into ASL. As such it may be the case that the need for interpreting into contact varieties of a signed language will decline.

At this point in time, however, this has not fully taken place. Many Deaf children are still being educated using a range of English-based signing systems, and a significant minority in the Deaf community still uses and comprehends contact varieties. The enrollment at residential schools for the Deaf is declining across Canada, with many Deaf children now being educated in the public school system. Frequently in these cases, either their teacher or their interpreter uses a strongly English-based system for signing. Thus, it seems more likely that the need for interpreters who are comfortable with contact signing will continue to exist, at least for the time being.

9. Conclusion

The preceding discussion has addressed the existence of contact sign within the Deaf community, and the factors that have led to its existence and continuation. Given that many Deaf people do use it, it is important for interpreters to gain mastery of interpreting into contact varieties of signed language in order to meet the communication preferences of the entire diverse Deaf community. Skills in signing ASL and interpreting into ASL are prerequisites to successful interpretation into a contact variety, but do not alone guarantee success. Interpreters need to study and practice the skills of combining features of ASL and English to produce a coherent message in the target language or language variety, tailored to the specific needs of each Deaf consumer. Negative attitudes on the part of members of the Deaf community towards contact sign, as well as on the part of interpreters, can create barriers to interpreters respecting and mastering these skills, and yet the need within the community clearly exists. As contact varieties of signed language are studied further, along with the processes which the interpreter undertakes when working with these varieties, we will gain a better understanding of the educational needs of interpreting students, and the ways in which they can be ensured of their readiness for work within the broad Deaf community in Canada.

Notes

1. This notation for fingerspelled loan signs follows Battison (1978) and is intended to differentiate these from fully formed fingerspelled words.

2. SEE 2 follows a three-point set of criteria for determining what sign to use to represent an English word. If two out of three criteria (sound, spelling and meaning) are the same, then the same sign will be used, even if the meaning of the sign in ASL would not convey the same

semantic intent as that of the English word. As well, signed affixes and inflections are used, such as the use of -S to mark a plural (e.g., cat, cat*s*) or the addition of -ING. Additional principles guiding the use of SEE 2 can be found in Gustafson, Pfetzing and Zawolkow (1980).

3. Siple (1997: 87) also points out that Manually Coded English in this definition refers collectively to a number of different sign systems that represent English.

4. The Conference of Interpreter Trainers is an organization whose mission is the promotion of quality education for interpreters working with ASL and English, including English-influenced forms of signing. Conferences are held biennially and proceedings of the conferences are published.

5. Cokely defines an addition as information that may be added to an interpretation which has no corollary in the source language message.

6. A gloss is an English word, written in upper case letters, used as a label to express the meaning of a sign. ASL and English lexical items may share similar meanings in some contexts, but depart from each other in other contexts.

7. See Section 2 above on Lucas and Valli's contribution to the definition of contact signing.

8. For further discussion, see the videotaped teleclass presented by Betty Colonomos, entitled "Processes in Interpretation and Transliteration: Making Them Work for You" (1992).

9. Colleagues who were consulted include Donna Korpiniski, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, Alberta; Campbell McDermid, George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario; Judy McGuirk, Red River College, Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Denise Smith, Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

10. Langue des Signes Québécoise.

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