

# ASL-ENGLISH INTERPRETERS AND –SELF/SELF FORMS: A DESCRIPTION OF SOURCE AND TARGET LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

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**ABSTRACT:** Among the many challenges of professional interpreting is translating lexical items that are grammatically close, but not identical, between two languages. In this microanalysis, we examined the output of American Sign Language-English interpreters as they rendered English pronominal –self forms (e.g. itself, himself, ourselves) into ASL. In English, –self forms function primarily as reflexives, referring to an entity already named in the discourse. Less often in English, –self forms function as emphatics, to highlight a specific referent in the discourse. Conversely, the ASL sign SELF has been analyzed functioning primarily as an emphatic in signed discourse. We investigated whether ASL-English interpreters rendered English –self forms primarily as reflexives, emphatics, or as some other grammatical function. The data consisted of six hours of video recorded English lectures that were interpreted into ASL. The results revealed a total of 50 –self forms in the English lectures; while the interpreters produced 101 ASL SELF forms. Regarding grammatical function, results indicated both the English and ASL interpretations used the forms primarily as reflexives: 68 percent in English and 55 percent in the ASL interpretations. Contrary to prior analyses, only 21 percent of the SELF forms in the ASL interpretations were emphatic. The results suggest that interpretations contain traces of the source language in the output as the result of interference at the lexical level.

**KEYWORDS:** Interpretation - Reflexive - Emphatic - Deictic - American Sign Language.

## I. INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most memorable lines in English-speaking theatre is “To thine own self be true”, spoken by Polonius to implore his son to behave with personal integrity. Upon hearing these words, the audience understands that ‘self’ refers to Polonius’ roguish son; but imagine if these classic Shakespearean words were interpreted into a visual language, specifically, American Sign Language (ASL). Would ‘self’ be conveyed as a referential pronoun or would it serve some other grammatical function? Interpreters strive to accurately convey the meaning and function of lexical items that are semantically close, but not identical, across two languages. In English, –self forms (e.g. itself, herself, ourselves) have been analyzed functioning primarily as *reflexives*, pronouns that are preceded or followed by the noun, adjective, adverb or pronoun to which it refers. Whereas in ASL, SELF<sup>1</sup> forms have been analyzed primarily as *emphatics*, personal pronouns that are used

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<sup>1</sup> By convention, signs are transcribed using capital letters in a reduced font size (SELF).

to highlight its referent. We were interested in examining how ASL-English interpreters render English *-self* and ASL SELF within the context of rapid lexical transfer. Will ASL-English interpreters produce ASL SELF most frequently as reflexives, or will SELF be interpreted primarily as emphatics? These results will provide insights into the role of interference in simultaneous interpretation.

American Sign Language is the predominant signed language of Deaf communities in the United States and English-speaking parts of Canada. In the United States, ASL emerged within the environment of an English-speaking majority, originating in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century at the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Since the 1960s ASL has been recognized as a distinct language with its own grammatical and phonological structure. ASL is embedded within an English environment on a daily basis, resulting in frequent contact between the languages (Cokely 1983; Lucas, & Valli 2000). ASL-English interpreters work between two languages that are produced and perceived in different modalities – an oral language that is perceived through the auditory system and a signed language, which uses the hands, face, and body as articulators and is perceived through the visual system. In this bimodal context (Emmorey, Borinstein, Thompson, & Gollan 2008), it is possible for interpreters to *transcode* by mapping ASL signs onto English syntactic structure. Transcoding is preferred by some Deaf consumers due to their language and educational background, but does not result in effective ASL interpretations for many Deaf consumers (Nicodemus, & Emmorey 2013).

In the past, it was assumed that both English *-self* forms and ASL SELF functioned primarily as reflexives in their respective languages; however, recent analyses from Wilkinson (2012) and Koulidobrova (2009) suggest that ASL SELF functions differently than its English counterpart. Given this difference, how will interpreters who are fluent in both English and ASL render these forms? One hypothesis is that the production of SELF in ASL interpretations will align with the English *-self* forms, which predicts a close ratio between English *-self* in the source text to the ASL SELF forms in the target text. This hypothesis predicts that the ASL SELF forms will serve as reflexives, as in English. If so, this suggests that interpreters may be transcoding throughout their interpretation due to English language interference (or by choice). It may also indicate that traces of the source language arise in interpreters' target language output. The concept of *deverbalization* (transforming source language input into pure meaning and forgetting the original words) that was advanced by Seleskovitch (1994) may not be accurate; in fact, according to results from a study by Isham (1994), systematic deverbalization does not occur, and that interpreters always retain some traces of the source message in the target language output.

On the other hand, it is also possible that interpreters' production of SELF when working into ASL will not follow the structure of English *-self* forms, predicting a different ratio of English *-self* in the source message to ASL SELF forms in the interpretation (either more or less). Further, it predicts that the interpreters will most often use ASL SELF as an emphatic. This finding would suggest that the interpreters are not experiencing language interference in their production of ASL SELF; rather, that they are creating interpretations free of influence from the source text. To analyze this situation further, we begin by summarizing prior research on the functional status of English *-self* forms and ASL SELF.

1. 1. *English -self forms*

The English *-self* form (e.g., ‘himself’) has historically been analyzed by its parts, composed of a determiner (e.g., ‘him’) and linked with the ‘self’ noun (Postal 1966). In English, *-self* is more often analyzed as a *reflexive*, that is, as a pronoun that marks co-referentiality of a single participant in a given event (Kemmer 1995). Two examples of English reflexive *-self* are given below:

- (1) The rodeo performer pushed **himself** out of the barrel.
- (2) She gave **herself** a treat for the holidays.

In both examples, only one referent is available in the sentence; thus the reflexive pronouns are easily understood as referring to “the rodeo performer” and “she” respectively. According to Ariel (1988), the referent in reflexive *-self* is easily identified due to its *accessibility*, a psychological notion that addresses the degree of ease for a person to retrieve a mental entity. In addition to being accessible, a critical aspect of reflexive *-self* is that the co-reference is fulfilled through predicates that evoke these participant roles, typically transitive verbs (Kemmer 1995). English *-self* forms manifest in a variety of ways, but the direct object co-reference configuration (as in Example 1) appears to be privileged, and is considered the prototypical category of English reflexives.

A secondary function of *-self* forms in English is to serve as an *emphatic*, to signal a focus on a particular participant which is understood as being “dominant” within the sentence or which has a heightened degree of prominence in the discourse (Erteschik-Shir 1973, 1981; Kemmer 1995; Kemmer, & Barlow 1996; König, & Siemund 2000). Examples of emphatic *-self* in English are provided in Examples (3) and (4).

- (3) I **myself** want to avoid any type of conflict.
- (4) I wanted Bob **himself** to pay the bill.

How does one distinguish between reflexive and emphatic *-self* in English? According to Kemmer (1995), there are several characteristics that distinguish the forms: 1) reflexive *-self* is always unstressed, while emphatic *-self* is marked with an obligatory prosodic stress marker; 2) reflexive *-self* is generally uttered within a noun phrase by itself, while emphatic *-self* is typically placed directly next to the head nominal (noun or pronoun) in an utterance; 3) reflexive *-self* is usually seen at the clausal level of discourse, while the emphatic can occur above the clause level, and 4) reflexive *-self* may represent both animate and inanimate entities, while emphatic *-self* refers most often to human referents.

The nature of reflexive *-self* includes the characteristics of being both unexpected but accessible in a sentence, while emphatic *-self* is identified for its contrastive and exclusionary functions (Ariel 1990; Kemmer, & Barlow 1996). Kemmer (1995) argues that these explanations do not go far enough and suggests that emphatic *-self* must be defined “in relation of its referent to speaker expectations” (p. 57). That is, emphatic *-self* may best be characterized in terms of its function to make direct reference to the discourse by setting up an unexpected referent and excluding others (Kemmer 1995; Plank 1979). Thus, both reflexive and emphatic *-self* are polysemous and highly accessible, but stress and placement help distinguish their different functions (Ariel 1990; Kemmer, & Barlow 1996). A summary of the characteristics of reflexive and emphatic *-self* forms is provided in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of reflexive and emphatic *-self* forms in English.  
(Kemmer 1995, 2003; Kemmer, & Barlow 1996).

	Reflexive <i>-self</i>	Emphatic <i>-self</i>
<b>Principal Function</b>	Signals (unexpected) co-reference between two clausal participants.	Identifies a referent that is salient in the discourse (in contrast to other potential referents that were just mentioned or could be mentioned).
<b>Markedness</b>	Unstressed.	Always stressed to some degree.
<b>Syntactic Range</b>	Constitutes a noun phrase by itself. Occurs only on non-subject participants of a clause (e.g., direct/indirect object).	Are necessarily adjuncts of their head nominal. Can occur in subject-noun phrases.
<b>Clausal Range</b>	At the clausal level.	Above the clause.
<b>Referents</b>	Can refer to both animate and inanimate referents.	Strongly associated with human referents.
<b>Listener Expectations</b>	Co-referent is unexpected.	Co-referent is unexpected and excludes other referents.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Highly accessible because the referent is relatively prominent.	Highly accessible because of close placement to the referent and the addition of stress.
<b>Dominance/Focus</b>	Does not bear the focus of the sentence.	Bears sentence focus or are a focused element in a multiple focus construction.

Both the reflexive and emphatic are complex categories with multiple subtypes representing conventional syntactic and semantic configurations. In fact, any co-reference signaled by a reflexive may have emphatic semantics superimposed on it, adding the quality that the co-referent participant is explicitly or implicitly contrasted with another potential referent. It is also possible for both functions to exist simultaneously by adding stress, as possible in examples (1) and (2). It is interesting to note that dual functions exist for a single English *-self* form, which is in contrast to all other Germanic languages in which the forms of emphatic reflexives (e.g., German *selbst*) differ from reflexive pronouns (e.g., German *sich*) (König, & Siemund 2000; Plank 1979).

## 1. 2. American Sign Language *SELF*

How does the sign *SELF* function in American Sign Language? Until relatively recently, *SELF* had been assumed to function the same as *-self* forms in English, primarily as a reflexive (Baker-Shenk, & Cokely 1980; Kegl 2003; Liddell 2003; Lillo-Martin 1995). Early studies of ASL *SELF* variously described it a *definiteness marker* (Fischer, & Johnson 1982), *specificity marker* (Wilbur 1996), and as a *presuppositional-ity marker* (Mathur 1996). In 2006, Sandler and Lillo-Martin offered a description of ASL *SELF* as a reflexive pronoun that marks co-referentiality with the subject participant, and which can be positioned in the object argument of a non-inflecting (plain) verb<sup>1</sup>. However, two recent analyses argue that ASL *SELF* is best viewed as a morpheme or adnominal intensifier that serves to mark emphasis (Koulidobrova 2009; Wilkinson 2013a).

Extending earlier observations made by Lee, Neidle, MacLaughlin, Bahan, and Kegl (1997) regarding the grammatical status of *SELF*, Koulidobrova (2009) argued that the function of ASL *SELF* is best understood by a single analysis – that of an *adnominal intensifier*. According to Koulidobrova, ASL *SELF* may appear as a long-distance anaphora, as occurs in Scandinavian or Chinese languages, but differs from these languages because it allows for non-subject antecedents that can appear only one clause away, and cannot be bound in the object position at a long distance. She stated that ASL *SELF* functions as does German *selbst*, an “identity function which can combine with individuals (definites and specific indefinites)” (p. 8) which adds nothing to the meaning of the truth conditions of the sentence.

In a later study, Wilkinson (2013a) analyzed 15 hours of naturalistic ASL discourse (elicited narratives, monologues, and two-person conversations) for instances of *SELF*. According to her analysis, 81.7 percent (n=107) of ASL *SELF* tokens functioned as *emphatics*, 13.7 percent (n=18) of the ASL *SELF* tokens functioned as *reflexives*, and 4.6 percent (n=6) functioned as *formulaic sequences*. A formulaic sequence is a construction of two or more signs that undergo phonological reduction to become a schematic, fused constituent structure that affects semantic/pragmatic uses (e.g. THINK-*SELF*+, translated as “think for yourself.” Wilkinson (2012, 2013a, 2013b) used a cognitive-functional approach to examine ASL *SELF* in discourse. In her analysis of three phonological *SELF* forms (See FIGURE 1), she argued that *SELF* exhibits other functions including formulaic sequences.

Wilkinson described the attributes of ASL *SELF* as reflexive, emphatic, and formulaic sequence, according to their principle function and verbs (See TABLE 2).

<sup>1</sup> A plain verb in ASL designates a state, process, or action. Plain verbs are not inflected to indicate the subject and object in a sentence. Rather, plain verbs require the signer to specify the subject and the object (e.g. pronouns and nouns) before or after the verb.



FIG. 1. Three phonological forms of ASL SELF  
(Used with permission of author, Wilkinson 2013a).

TABLE 2. Grammatical functions of SELF in ASL according to Wilkinson (2013a).

	Reflexive	Emphatic	Formulaic Sequence
Principal Function	Functions as an anaphora with the subject of the clause.	Designates the target referent with the explicit intention of disambiguating it from other potential referents in the discourse.	Behave as a constituent structure (e.g. THINK-SELF).
Verb	Most use non-inflecting lexical verbs that require both syntactic and semantic roles to be fulfilled (e.g., IDENTIFY, KEEP).	Use lexical verb or no verb.	Not discussed.

In Wilkinson's (2013a) functional analysis of ASL SELF, she also identified an emerging schema, labeled 'pointing SELF', in which SELF is adjoined to a deictic sign. Deictics are linguistic elements that show or point to something in the discourse to indicate aspects of the situational or discourse context (Fillmore 1997; Levinson 2004). English has a wide variety of expressions that are analyzed as deictics: personal pronouns (e.g. *I, you, he*), spatial adverbs (e.g. *here, there*), demonstratives (e.g. *this, that*), temporal adverbs (e.g. *now, then, tomorrow*), discourse deixis (e.g. *the latter, the aforementioned*), and social deixis (e.g. *Mr. President, Your Majesty*) (Fillmore 1997). In addition, various other linguistic forms can be used deictically when combined with a true deictic (Diessel 2006).

In ASL, deictics designate specific referents in the immediate environment or specific spatial locations in the sign space (Hoffmeister 1977). Deictic markers are often realized in the form of a pointing gesture or sign, intended to direct attention to a particular entity. Typically, these pointing signs are coded by the gloss 'INDEX'. Much research has been conducted on the INDEX deictic form, while very little analysis has been conducted on other deictic forms in ASL (Pizzuto, Rossini, Sallandre, & Wilkinson 2009; Sloan 2013). Despite this, definitions of deictics in ASL remain ambiguous and contradictory.

In this study, we ask how English *-self* forms and ASL SELF are produced in the context of simultaneous interpretation and further, specifically, what grammatical function will SELF take in the ASL interpretations.

## II. METHODS

### *Data*

The data in this study were taken from eight video recorded instructional lectures. Each of the lectures was delivered in English and interpreted into ASL. Five of the lectures were delivered live to audiences at Gallaudet University in Washington DC and addressed the topics of sentence processing, qualitative/quantitative research, gesture, brain plasticity, and diversity. The video recordings were accessed from the Gallaudet University video archive (<http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu>). Of the remaining three videos, one was accessed through the Gallaudet library collection, and the other two were in the video collections of the researchers. Each of these lectures was produced for interpreter education on the topics of personal growth, multimedia communication systems, and geography. The total length of the eight video recordings was approximately six hours.

Eleven different professional ASL-English interpreters rendered interpretations of the lectures working uni-directionally from English into ASL. All of the interpreters had a high degree of professional interpreting experience. Each of the interpretations was unrehearsed, meaning delivered without prior exposure to the original English source text. TABLE 3 provides a summary description of the data sources used in this study.

TABLE 3. Summary of data sources used for study, including lecture information, its web link, interpreter (INT), and total interpreting time.

#	Lecture title or description	Web link	INT	Total time interpreting
1	<i>Sentence processing in L2 readers: Linguistic and exposure-based factors</i>	<a href="http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=13419">http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=13419</a>	A B	8:24 40:13
2	<i>Qualitative and quantitative: Two scientific ways of knowing</i>	<a href="http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=6248">http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=6248</a>	C D	44:12 11:23
3	<i>Gesture's role in creating and learning language</i>	<a href="http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=6058">http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=6058</a>	E B	45:59 26:50
4	<i>Brain plasticity and learning: Lesson from deafness</i>	<a href="http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=7288">http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=7288</a>	B C	43:46 33:08
5	<i>Diversity's promise for higher education: Making it work</i>	<a href="http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16829">http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16829</a>	A F	54:43 28:03
6	Commercial video designed for interpreter education	N/A	G	13:11

#	Lecture title or description	Web link	INT	Total time interpreting
7	Classroom-style lecture for interpreter education	N/A	H	13:49
8	Classroom-style lecture for interpreter education	N/A	I	8:24

### Analysis

The data coding process began by identifying instances of *-self* forms in the English source message, and SELF forms in the ASL interpretation. Each instance of SELF was coded using Wilkinson's (2013a) phonological categories, including SELF+, SELF++, and SELF-ONE+++<sup>1</sup> (See FIGURE 1 above), as well as additional forms that were produced by the interpreters, resulting in a total of eight phonological forms of ASL SELF in the interpretations. In FIGURE 2 we provide images of the eight ASL forms found in the data.

After identifying the various SELF forms, we transcribed the discourse environment of each utterance using written English glosses that represented the closest semantic equivalent to the ASL sign (See Appendix A for a sample). Tokens were eliminated from both the English and ASL data that included *-self* or SELF that served a grammatical function different than examined in this study. For example, in English, 'self' was sometimes used as an adjective ('self-paced,' 'self-reporting') or noun ('self-talk,' 'self-doubt'). In these cases, 'self' doesn't serve as either a referring expression or as an emphatic. In ASL, a small number (n=2) of these examples are transcoded (literally translated) based on their English form (ex. SELF-REPORT) and these were also eliminated from analysis. Each token in the data was coded for the grammatical function for both English *-self* and ASL SELF forms.

The researchers viewed the videos numerous times during the coding process and jointly made decisions about the grammatical status of the forms based on the definitions in TABLES 1 and 2; however, no claim is made that the coding is completely accurate. Identifying the various features of these items is an inexact science, especially with tokens that may serve multiple functions. Despite these cautionary notes, we offer our analysis for consideration.

### Results

#### English *-self* forms:

In the eight video recordings of the lectures, the speakers produced a total of 50 tokens of English *-self* forms. The researchers analyzed each token for its grammatical function as being either reflexive, emphatic, or mixed reflexive/emphatic. As anticipated, the majority of the English *-self* forms were analyzed as reflexives (n=34/68%). A smaller number (n=12) were analyzed as emphatics, and only a handful of tokens (n=4) had mixed reflexive and emphatic functions. A variety of English *-self* forms were used by the speakers with *yourself* being the most frequent. The number of the individual English *-self* forms is given in TABLE 4.

<sup>1</sup> Following Wilkinson, we did not intend the gloss SELF-ONE to indicate that the meaning of ONE is retained in the form (i.e. the non-dominant index finger). Rather, the labels are used to distinguish between the different phonological forms of SELF.





FIG. 2. Variants of *SELF* produced in ASL interpretations (produced by a sign model).

TABLE 4. Number of each English *-self* form types in the source language.

	herself	itself	themselves	yourself	himself	myself	ourselves
Total #	1	9	10	12	8	3	7
Percent	(2%)	(18%)	(20%)	(24%)	(16%)	(6%)	(14%)

### ASL SELF

#### *- Number of ASL SELF forms*

The interpreters produced double ( $N=101$ ) the number of *SELF* forms in their target output compared to the number of English *-self* forms in the source text. Interestingly, nearly one-fourth of the *SELF* forms ( $n=23$ ) were produced by a single interpreter and in the shortest interpreting time period (See highlighted section in TABLE 5). A total of 15 matches were found between the English *-self* and the ASL

SELF forms. For this study, a “match” describes the situation in which the interpreters used ASL SELF to represent the English *–self* and both the ASL and English forms served the same grammatical function. A summary of the number of forms produced in the source and target texts is provided in TABLE 5 below.

TABLE 5. Summary of English *–self* and ASL SELF tokens.

#	Lecture Title or Description	# of English <i>–self</i> forms	INT	Total interpreting time	# of ASL SELF forms	# of matches
1	<i>Sentence processing in L2 readers: Linguistic and exposure-based factors</i>	2	A	8:24	23	2
			B	40:13	3	0
2	<i>Qualitative and quantitative: Two scientific ways of knowing</i>	4	C	44:12	5	0
			D	11:23	0	0
3	<i>Gesture’s role in creating and learning language</i>	15	E	45:59	14	3
			B	26:50	11	3
4	<i>Brain plasticity and learning: Lesson from deafness</i>	12	B	43:46	6	1
			C	33:08	7	2
5	<i>Diversity’s promise higher education: Making it work</i>	7	A	54:43	10	2
			F	28:03	8	1
6	Commercial video designed for interpreter education	8	G	13:11	8	1
7	Classroom-style lecture for interpreter education	0	H	13:49	1	0
8	Classroom-style lecture for interpreter education	2	I	8:20	5	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>			<b>101</b>	<b>15</b>

### - Phonological forms of SELF

We also analyzed the various phonological forms of SELF in the data. The most frequent use of SELF was the sign SELF-ONE++ (the plus symbol indicates repetitions). The category of SELF-other was comprised of outliner tokens that didn't fit into the other categories, such as BLAME-SELF or WORD-SELF. TABLE 6 provides a breakdown of the phonological form in the data.

TABLE 6. Phonological forms found in the data.

	SELF+	SELF-ONE+	my. SELF+	SELF++	SELF-ONE++	my. SELF++	our. SELF	SELF. plural	SELF. other
Total #	9	20	4	12	28	18	1	3	6

### - Grammatical function of SELF forms

In regard to grammatical function, the greatest number of ASL SELF tokens (n=56) was analyzed as reflexives. This was followed by tokens that were mixed as reflexive emphatics (n=17) or solely as emphatics (n=21). SELF was used 6 times for its deictic function, in combination with another grammatical function (Four as reflexive deictics, and two as emphatic deictics). Finally, one token was a formulaic sequence (BLAME-SELF). (See TABLE 7 for a summary of the functional analysis.)

TABLE 7. Grammatical functions of SELF forms in ASL (in order of frequency).

	Reflexive	Reflexive Emphatic	Emphatic	Reflexive Deictic	Emphatic Deictic	Formulaic Sequence
Total #	56	17	21	4	2	1

## III. DISCUSSION

In this study we analyzed English *-self* forms (in monologic lectures) and ASL SELF (in simultaneous interpretations of those lectures) to determine the degree of alignment between the source and target language during interpretation. We proposed two contrasting hypotheses: one, that the production of SELF forms in the ASL interpretations would closely match in number and grammatical function with the production English *-self* forms in the source message. A close alignment between the languages would suggest that the interpreters transcoded these forms in their work or experienced language interference from the English source input. Our second hypothesis was that production of SELF by the interpreters would *not* align with the English *-self* forms in number or function, which would suggest no source language interference for these lexical items in the interpretations.

Regarding the number of forms, the results indicated a disparity between the frequency of the *-self/SELF* forms used in each language, with double the number of SELF forms in ASL interpretations as the *-self* forms in the English lectures. This finding indicates that interpreters were not bound to the source message, but rather were producing SELF forms independent of the source and with much greater frequency. Further, only 15 of the ASL SELF forms matched the English

usage in terms of exact alignment in grammatical function. This high number of ASL SELF forms that do not match the English source suggests that the interpreters were not transcoding in a sign-for-word manner; rather, they produced many ASL SELF forms independent of the source text. It may also indicate that SELF is used with greater frequency than English *-self* forms, although a comparative corpus analysis would need to be conducted to confirm this claim.

For grammatical function, the majority of SELF tokens (77%) produced by the interpreters were classified as reflexives (or mixed reflexives), rather than as emphatics. This result diverges from Wilkinson's analysis in which the majority of Deaf signers used SELF for an emphatic function. Why would interpreters produce a high number of ASL SELF forms that were primarily reflexives? It may be that the interpreters consciously or unconsciously incorporated English-like forms into their work because their audience was comprised of Deaf academic ASL-English bilinguals who presumably understand the reflexive function of English *-self* forms. It may also be that the interpreters defaulted to the reflexive status typical in English because their knowledge of English was interfering with the production into the target message. It may also be, as suggested by Wilkinson (2013b), that the nature of the source text (an academic lecture) does not lend itself to the use of the emphatic SELF form, as it does in other discourse genres.

Thus, these results don't fully support either of the proposed hypotheses fully. One may conclude that the interpreters are not transcoding as only a few of their productions of ASL SELF match with the source text, but there does appear to be some interference or English influence at the level of grammatical function in the target message, as indicated by the high degree of reflexive SELF forms.

Of further interest in the results was the high number ( $n=23$ ) of SELF forms produced by one particular interpreter. This result could suggest that use of ASL SELF is idiosyncratic in interpreters' language use. However, the frequency may also have been driven by nature of the source text, which was a lengthy introduction of a speaker, in which use of the reflexive was more likely. This high number of ASL SELF forms is noteworthy because it affected the total number of the ASL SELF tokens as well as the number classified as reflexives.

Also of interest was the interpreters' incorporation of deictic functions into their target texts in four instances of SELF. In these instances, the interpreters were using SELF to "point" to visible entities in the room (e.g. an image on the speaker's PowerPoint slide or toward a specific individual in the room). These findings support Wilkinson's (2013) observations that SELF served a pointing function in Deaf signers' discourse.

Our findings hold potential implications for the signed language interpreting profession, particularly for its impact on teaching semantic and grammatical functions of individual lexical items in English and ASL. Based on these results, interpreter education programs may incorporate lessons about specific lexical forms, both for their frequency and grammatical function. From these stimuli, students could create interpretations into either ASL or English and do a targeted comparison of specific lexical items, such as *-self*/SELF forms. Such assignments could be framed in an overarching examination of ASL and English grammar.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This study examined *-self* forms in eight English source language texts and use of SELF in American Sign Language interpretations. The aim of the study was to gain information about the form and function of a specific set of lexical items across the two languages during simultaneous interpretation. The findings supported prior analysis of English that *-self* forms are primarily reflexive. Further, the results indicated that the ASL SELF forms produced during interpretation are also most frequently reflexive, which may be due to influences in the English source language or conscious decisions by the interpreters. The results of the ASL data diverge from prior grammatical analyses of ASL SELF as emphatics. The earlier data was based on data from Deaf signers, suggesting that rapid linguistic transfer influences target language production during the interpretation process. This study informs our knowledge of the grammatical function of ASL SELF forms, specifically within interpretation and provides information that may be useful to interpreter practitioners and educators.

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