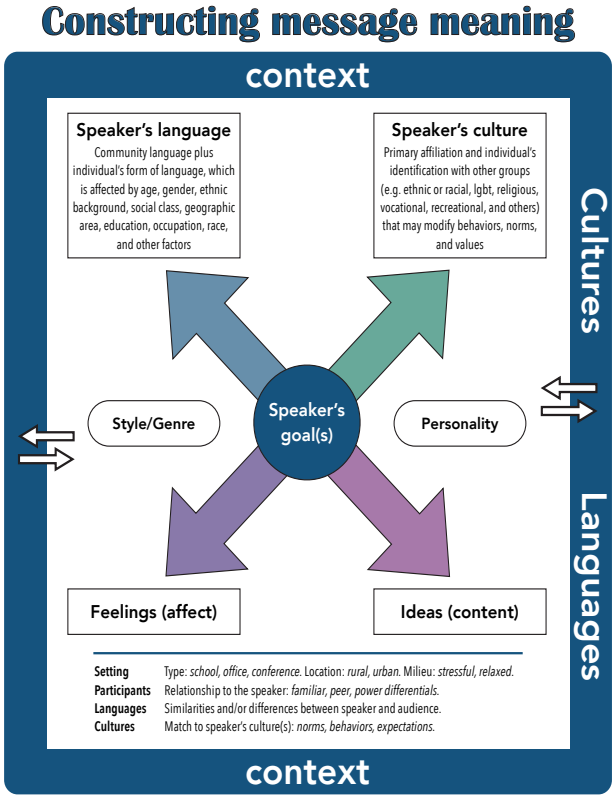
# Integrated Model of Interpreting
## Supplemental Notes and Diagrams

### Introduction

The Integrated Model of Interpreting was inspired by the work of Danica Seleskovitch (1978)*. The materials presented here were developed by Betty M. Colonomos as material to hand out in classes and workshops. This model (known then as the Colonomos Model) began to take shape in the early 1980s. A number of revisions (labels, graphics, and additions/deletions) have been made; however, the basic concept of IMI has not changed.




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*Constructing Message Meaning shows the components that interact to help identify the message and its meaning, which is important because interpreting is primarily about conveying equivalent meaning.*

### A. Source/Target Message

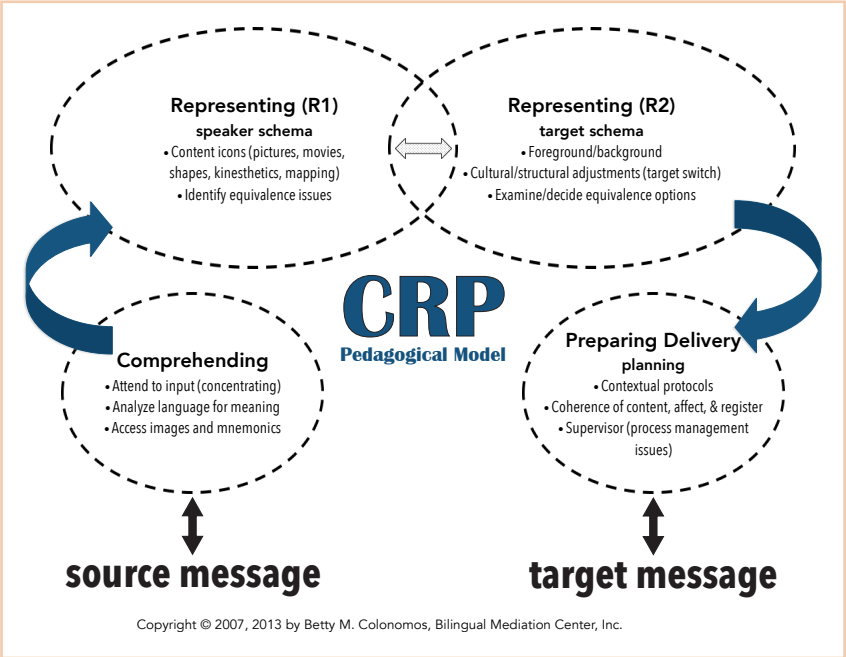
Boxes in the graphic shown here include the components of message meaning. How do we construct meaning (the message)? Refer to it for more information.

### B. Receptive/Expressive Channels

These areas refer to the channel(s) of transmission from the speaker (receptive) or expression from the interpreter (expressive). For example, the speaker may be speaking English (auditory channel to the interpreter), but may also be pointing/gesturing/ posturing (which conveys meaning) through the visual channel. For these reasons it is important to hear and see the speaker whenever possible. Practicing interpreting from audiotape limits the interpreter's ability to discern meaning.

* *Seleskovitch, Danica. (1978) Interpreting for International Conferences. Penn and Booth, Washington, DC.*

# **C**omprehending
# **R**epresenting (R1, R2)
# **P**reparing/Planning (CRP)




*The CRP graphic above is extrapolated from the IMI graphic in order to focus attention on the specific cognitive operations that determine the interpreting product.*

*It allows us to look at the interpreting brain regardless of language, people, and situation. Because we are unable to have direct access to the brain's operations; we must have a way to discuss and infer what is going on so that we can develop, modify, and/or validate our own tools, strategies, and decisions.*

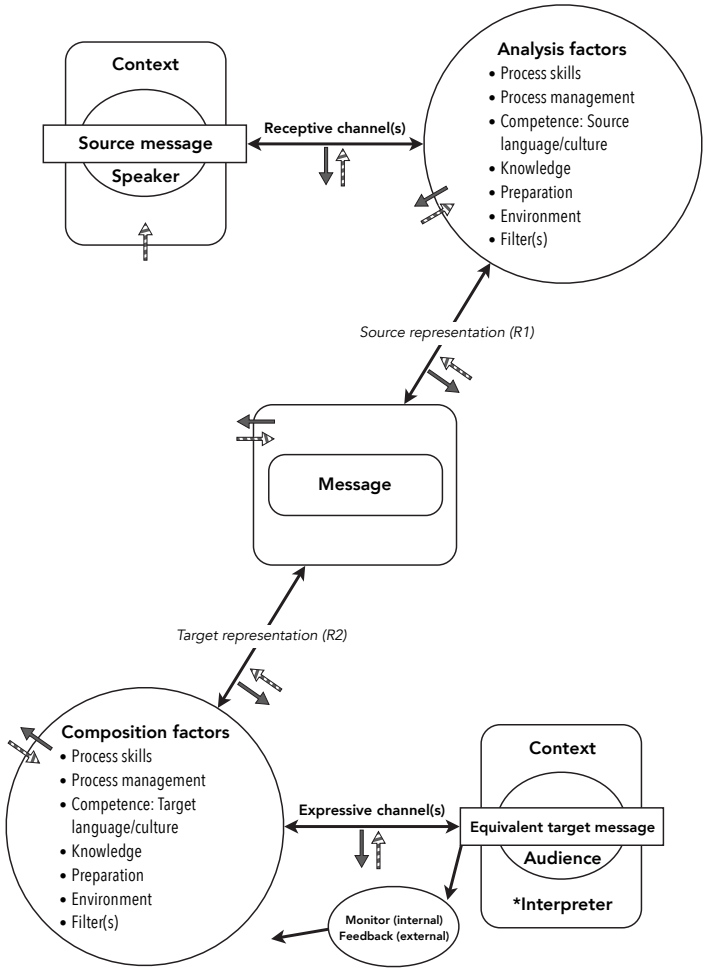
*The CRP Language graphic at right is the way students discuss the work in Foundations (in English) using these phrases, which are non- evaluative/ non-judgmental. It is a critical part of the training to create a safe environment for students.*

## CRP Language

*Use Sign* when referencing something in Sign, "I SAW…"
*Use spoken English* when referencing something in spoken English, "I heard…"

| Evaluative/Judgmental | Non-evaluative/Non-judgmental |
|---|---|
| • She/he (referring to the interpreter) said/signed… | • The interpretation/the interpreter |
| • I would have… | • I thought the goal was to (verb). |
| • She/he could have, or should have… | • When I saw (use Sign to convey what you saw), I understood it to mean… |
| • Clear/unclear | • When I heard (use spoken English to covey what you heard), I understood it to mean… |
| • Good/bad, right/wrong | • I thought the **affect type** was (type) because I saw/heard (Sign/English example)… |
| • More/less, better worse | • I thought the **degree of text affect** was (L,M,H) because I saw/heard (Sign/English example)… |
| • Same/different | • I thought the **degree of person affect** was (L,M,H) because I saw/heard (Sign/English example)… |
| • Match/didn't match | • I saw a pattern. Here are examples that might help illustrate… (Sign/English examples) |
| • Equivalent/not equivalent | • I would like to look at the CRP model to look at the process. |
| • Appropriate/inappropriate | |
| • I liked the way… | |
| • I thought it worked | |
| • A better way to communicate that would be… | |
| • Gee, that was really hard/easy. | |

## Integrated Model of Interpreting (IMI)




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*This graphic diagrams the entire IMI model. Please note where CRP is situated in the mode; it is the pivotal point when the Source Message flows into to cognitive processes, where decisions are made that ultimately guide the production of an equivalent Target Message.*

# C. Analysis and Composition Factors

The following items (1-7) are an expansion of the items listed under ***Analysis Factors*** and ***Composition Factors*** in the process model, written to assist the reader in understanding the scope of each factor. These factors significantly affect (perhaps determine) the degree to which successful interpretation can be accomplished.

## 1. Process Skills

***Analysis Factors*** refers to the interpreter's ability to quickly and accurately derive meaning from the source message; it includes attending (blocking distraction), analysis and synthesis, ability to access short-term memory,

ability to access longterm memory for knowledge (see below), and retaining form when appropriate (e.g. proper names).

***Composition Factors*** refers to the interpreter's ability to quickly and accurately construct language forms from the Message; it includes retrieval of linguistic and cultural knowledge, ability to access short-term memory, ability to access long-term memory for knowledge (see below), as well as planning the production of the target message.

## 2. Process Management

This element of the process is responsible for "supervisory" functions and overseeing numerous sub-tasks, such as:

- allotting and modifying process (lag) time to allow for analysis/ composition
- chunking message units into manageable sections
- monitoring the sequence of operations
- making decisions about obtaining clarification/restatement from the speaker (in ***Analysis*** stage)
- making decisions about repairing a portion of the target message (in ***Composition*** stage)
- making decisions about reliance on an external monitor (team member)

## 3. Competence in Source/Target Language and Culture

***Language*** refers to both knowledge about grammatical rules, vocabulary repertoire, discourse styles, and phonological constraints as well as the ability to perform functions in these languages appropriate to context.

***Culture*** refers to both knowledge about norms, values, rules, traditions, and beliefs held by members of the culture as well as the ability to behave in culturally appropriate ways in various contexts.

In addition to the individual languages/cultures, it is necessary for the interpreter to have an understanding of the ways in which the languages and cultures are similar and are different (cross linguistic/cultural competence). This knowledge assists the interpreter in "flagging" particular linguistic or cultural elements which may need to be acted upon (e.g. recognizing that an item is uninterpretable) by the supervisor (see ***Process Management***).

## 4. Knowledge

This term refers to the stored (long-term memory) experiences and learning that the interpreter has accumulated in all sensory and intellectual contexts.

Knowledge may be stored non-linguistically, some in only one language/ culture, and sometimes knowledge is stored cross-linguistically/culturally. For any given assignment, this refers specifically to knowledge relevant to the message being interpreted.

## 5. Preparation

This item refers to any means the interpreter has used to prepare for the task at hand, either prior to the assignment or during it. It includes:

- physical dimensions (e.g. sleep, exercise, nourishment)
- emotional/psychological dimensions (e.g. confidence, stress management)
- content-related dimensions (e.g. meeting with speaker, researching topic)
- contextual dimensions (e.g. finding out about the participants, environment)
- task-related dimensions (e.g. meeting with team members, coordinator)

## 6. Environment

This refers to any and all conditions that exist at the time of the interpretation.

External environmental factors include:

- physical factors (e.g. lighting, temperature, time of day, proximity to speaker/ audience/team member, noise)
- psychological factors (e.g. stress, emotional displays)
- cultural factors (e.g. conflicting behaviors and/or expectations)

Internal environmental factors include:

- physical (e.g. fatigue, illness)
- psychological (e.g. perceived evaluation, bonding with speaker)
- emotional (e.g. reaction to speaker/topic, audience) state(s) of the interpreter

## 7. Filter(s)

This item refers to the interpreter's own "baggage" which may filter in, filter out, or distort any aspect of the message as well as process factors listed above. Despite claims to the contrary, interpreters (as human beings) have their own biases, beliefs, personalities, and habits that do affect how they perceive people, situations, and meaning. The ability to recognize when filters may be hindering one's own performance and accessing the resources necessary to intervene (or make some other decision), may be crucial to the outcome.

## D. Message

Message refers to the meaning of the speaker's message, represented through nonlinguistic (ideally) means, which has been extracted by the interpreter during the analysis phase of the process. The absence of linguistic symbols frees the interpreter from the constraints of language meanings so that they may optimally recreate the message using target language forms that most appropriately convey message equivalence. Certain language forms, however, cannot be separated from their meanings (such as proper names).

*Source Representation (R1)* refers to the non-linguistic representation from the source message perspective. Keeping the message in the speaker's frame of reference prevents the interpreter from prematurely representing the message from the target audience's point of view, which may result in a loss of meaning. It also helps the interpreter more readily identify which aspects of the speaker's meaning may need modification or adjustment.

*Target Representation (R2)* refers to the non-linguistic representation from the perspective of the target audience. Shifting the message to the audience's frame of reference facilitates the interpreter in composing an equivalent message into the target language. This switch in representation may also help to identify aspects of the speaker's message that need expansion or clarification. For example, if the English speaker is describing an accident they may be using prepositions such as "near" or "across from" without providing enough spatial information to allow an accurate rendition into ASL. This stage of the process allows the interpreter to recognize the need for more information and obtain it from the speaker.

## E. Monitor/Feedback

After the segment of text is interpreted, there are both internal and external forces that may prompt the interpreter to act on their just-completed production. The internal one is called the ***Monitor*** (which operates throughout the process as well), and it may signal the interpreter that repair is needed. For example, if the interpreter realizes that her/his English interpretation was not a complete thought, the Monitor may revert to the composition stage and complete the sentence. Another way this may be accomplished is through external feedback. This feedback may come from the interpreter's team member or the audience. For example, the interpreter fingerspells a name and a Deaf person in the audience corrects it for the interpreter. The interpreter may repair the spelling, if the internal monitor decides that is appropriate or possible to do (e.g. if the interpreter is falling too far behind or is preoccupied with a processing a difficult segment of the text, they may decide not to repair.)

## F. Arrows

The two-sided arrows (  ) between phases of the process show that these stages are not separate and strictly sequential. In other words, there may be interaction between the analysis and representation (message) stages before the interpreter moves on to composition.

At any stage in the process the interpreter may access an earlier stage. The solid gray arrows (  ) indicate that the interpreter has chosen to exit the process at that point and access an earlier stage. The striped arrows (  ) indicate access to a particular part of the process. For example, if the interpreter knows they did not see/hear something the speaker signed/said, they would exit at receptive channel (gray arrow) and access the speaker (striped arrow) or their team member (not shown) for the information that was missed.

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