# Typology of Interpreter-Mediated Discourse That Affects Perceptions of the Identity of Deaf Professionals

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In the United States, major events over the past four decades have helped shape the professional lives of Deaf people whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL). One such event was the recognition of American Sign Language as a natural language, prompted by the seminal writings of William Stokoe in 1960. Thirty years after this groundbreaking work, the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) guaranteed access to employment, government offices and services, public accommodations, and telecommunications, as well as legal protection for asserting these rights, expanding the scope of civil rights that had been guaranteed under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Subsequently, Deaf people who use signed language have pursued professional careers in a variety of settings, including government, academia, technology, business, and the arts. In most employment settings, hearing employees are not fluent in signed language and frequently use interpreters to facilitate communication between signers and nonsigners. In many work environments, hearing nonsigning individuals are in positions of authority and rely on interpreters while conducting work evaluations of Deaf employees.

Also during the 1990s, social science researchers began exploring the interactive nature of identity co-construction. One outcome of such work is the recognition that situated identity is socially constructed and that social identity is interactive (Bailey, 2000; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Proponents of negotiated identity co-construction suggest that identity is situationally based and negotiated by the interactants (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Throughout interactions, participants are engaged in the task of assessing and "constructing" their concept of the identity of their interlocutors. That identity is understood not only from previous interactions, but also and specifically in relation to the event and conversation they are engaged in at that moment.

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In an earlier unpublished study (Feyne, 2014), I detailed theories on interactive negotiated identity construction in dyadic discourse and reported data demonstrating the impact of different interpreter-mediated encounters on the situated identity of Deaf professional docents in a museum setting. I argued that in triadic discourse, the utterances of interpreters have an impact on the identity construction of the main interlocutors. In this chapter, I extend this analysis to explore variations in interpreter-mediated discourse. The data from the earlier study serve as the basis for a typology of domains of interpreted utterances that appear to influence recipient perceptions of signing Deaf professionals.

## BACKGROUND

ASTM International (formerly the American Society for Testing and Materials) is an organization that establishes standards and criteria for a variety of professions. Its definition of interpretation has been cited by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) as well as interpreting referral agencies. ATSM has defined interpretation as "the process of understanding and analyzing a spoken or signed message and re-expressing that message faithfully, accurately and objectively in another language, taking the cultural and social context into account" (ASTM, 2007, p. 1). This definition, however, is idealized; objectivity is not possible in interpreted encounters (Metzger, 1999). Interpreters, like all humans, have individual personalities, linguistic resources, and responses to language and people (Duranti, 1986; Irvine, 1989) that are brought to every assignment.

Various scholars have explored the role of interpreters in interaction and have suggested that interpreters are conversational participants in triadic communication (Davidson, 2000; Pöchhacker, 2012; Roy, 1999; Wadensjö, 1998). In such interactions, Pöchhacker (2012) designates interpreters as *ratified participants*, but distinguishes them from the primary participants (interlocutors whose communication requires the services of the interpreter). Further, Janzen and Shaffer (2008) argue that interpreters, along with the primary participants, are negotiating context and meaning throughout the interaction. Once the source meaning is ascertained, interpreters continue to negotiate meaning by engaging in the intersubjective task of determining how to transmit the message in a way that will be understood by the recipients.



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The manner in which meaning is expressed is part of one's linguistic identity. Kroskrity (2000) defines identity as "the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories" (p. 106). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) detail the interactive process by which a speaker constructs and presents his or her identity through language use and the recipient assigns an identity to the speaker. The process is ongoing, with participants continuously negotiating, refining, and/or reifying the situated identities. Factors that affect the situated identity of interlocutors include the relationship of the interactants, their relative power in that setting, the intended results of the interaction, the manner in which the speaker presents himself or herself, as well as the interlocutors' own beliefs about identity, language, and interaction (Duranti, 1986). Those beliefs are "informed by a framework of ideas about language and about the kinds of people who speak in certain ways" (Irvine, 1989, p. 255). Thus, language ideologies as well as the language use of participants in dyadic interactions contribute to situated identity (Bailey, 2000; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). In my work, I expand the discussion of language ideologies and identity by exploring triadic encounters.

Ochs (1992) delineates the constitutive relationship between language and identity with a model that addresses a web of "socially organized pragmatic meanings" (p. 343). According to Ochs, recipients' knowledge of these meanings entails tacit understandings of

> (1) how particular linguistic forms can be used to perform particular pragmatic work (such as conveying stand and social action) and (2) norms, preferences, and expectations regarding the distribution of this work vis-à-vis particular social identities of speakers, referents, and addressees. (1992, p. 344)

Bailey (2000) also suggests that language use is a marker of social identity: "Indirect constitution of identity through language is an interactional process in which individual social actors align themselves with others (i.e., communicate co-membership) or differentiate themselves from others (i.e., mark social boundaries)" (p. 559). These observations are germane not only to dyadic interactions but also to interpreted interactions, because the utterances of interpreters convey social cues along with the content information.

Drew and Heritage (1992) argue that in interactions, in addition to performing their tasks, many specialists establish their situated identity



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by engaging in "institutional talk." The authors assert that in many forms of institutional discourse "there is a direct relationship between status and role, on the one hand, and discursive rights and obligations, on the other" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 29), often with role-dependent distributions of knowledge, conversational resources, and participation rights. When professionals speak with such knowledge, resources, and rights, lay people often recognize them as experts.

Interpreters are professionals whose work product is language. In an unpublished paper (Feyne, 2013), I proposed that the speech of working interpreters satisfies all the criteria that Drew and Heritage (1992) established for "institutional talk." The main points of the assessment are that (a) interpreters' institutional identities are made relevant to their work; (b) there are specific constraints on the language of interpreters; (c) interpreters design their turns so as to exhibit a "position of neutrality with respect to their co-participants" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 47); and (d) interpreters have different communicative rights than other conversational participants. By virtue of both their role in interpreted interaction and the discourse they produce, interpreters are perceived as experts and their speech is accepted as "institutional." Important questions arise from this understanding. Is there an impact of the "institutional talk" of interpreters on recipients' perceptions of the situated identity of interpreted interlocutors? If so, does this impact extend to the assessment of the situated identity of professionals whose own "institutional talk" is interpreted?

Research in interpretation has demonstrated that interpreters do not simply serve as *animators* (terminology from Goffman's participation framework; Goffman, 1981; Wadensjö, 1992), meaning that they are not merely transmitting a verbatim representation of the source language into the target language, but that they actually author target language utterances by expressing messages that are not verbatim renditions of the source and/or by interjecting their own content (Merlini & Favaron, 2003; Metzger, Fleetwood, & Collins, 2004; Pöchhacker, 2012). Davidson (2000) argues that "interpreters do not merely convey messages; they shape and, in some very real sense, create those messages in the name of those for whom they speak" (p. 382).

However, when laypersons encounter the institutional talk of interpreters during interpreter-mediated encounters they often assume that interpreters are experts and function as verbatim animators. In previous research, I conducted interviews with noninterpreters, who offered statements reflecting their ideologies of the function of signed language



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interpreters, for example, "You're saying just what they're saying" (interview, May 1, 2011). The participants emphatically asserted that everything expressed by interpreters (including fillers, vocal inflections, and other prosodic markers) is a verbatim rendition of the original message. They believed that interpreted utterances in English were presented in the exact same manner as the Deaf person had presented it in ASL. In effect, the participants' beliefs about how interpreters function led them to accept every interpreted utterance as "institutional talk" and, presumably, as a verbatim representation of the source language.

Previous studies by Jan Blommaert, Brad Davidson, and Philip Angermeyer address the impact of interpretation on interaction in institutional settings. Blommaert (2001, 2006) explored interpretations of interviews with individuals seeking political asylum. He noted that patterns of speech may have a particular relevance for an individual speaker in their source language, but may be misunderstood by recipients in interpreted institutional encounters or in any situation where systems of meaning-making meet. These misunderstandings may result in the nondominant language speaker being judged as less credible.

Indeed, it is clear that adding interpreters to the mix results in mediated understandings of situated identities, and that the understanding of institutional talk in these settings cannot be taken for granted. Davidson (2000) studied triadic encounters in medical settings. His findings suggest a link between interpretation and the perception doctors may have of their patients. Similarly, in a study of interpretation in legal settings, Angermeyer (2005) investigated the ramifications of interpreters producing literal interpretations of questions without clearly identifying the intended recipient of questions. This behavior elicited responses from the recipients of interpretation that often violated the tacit norms of the setting, resulting in negative reactions from judicial officers. All of these studies address situations in which the nondominant language speakers are in a relatively less powerful position in the encounter than the individual(s) evaluating them.

## MUSEUMS AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

As with other institutions, museum administrators also hold expectations of institutional discourse from their docents who educate museum visitors about exhibits. As in any professional interaction, when docents are



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lecturing, their institutional identities are made relevant to their work. During these talks, docents hold different communicative rights than do their recipients. By virtue of their role in the museum talk and their background knowledge, lay people as well as colleagues view docents as experts, and their speech is recognized as "institutional." To evaluate job performance, the talks of museum docents are assessed for content and professionalism.

Discourse produced by Deaf docents during lectures, as with hearing docents, is expected to reflect institutional standards for the docent's role-dependent distribution of knowledge and conversational resources. When such talks are simultaneously interpreted from ASL into spoken English, results suggest that hearing interlocutors assume interpreted discourse accurately represents the language and communicative choices of Deaf docents. Museum personnel in supervisory positions who are not fluent in ASL often utilize such interpretations in evaluating the professionalism of Deaf signing docents, rating them on their institutional talk that is mediated by interpreters. Findings suggest that museum personnel are often unaware that interpreters make decisions on the lexical, sentential, phrasal, and discourse levels (Colonomos, 1992a), and assume that interpreted utterances accurately reflect the institutional talk of the Deaf docent. As a result, the communicative choices made by interpreters may have an impact on assessments of the competence of the Deaf presenters.

In this chapter, I explore interpreted institutional encounters in which Deaf professional presenters offer signed lectures that are expected to conform to professional institutional norms. Nonsigning museum evaluators assess the competence of the Deaf lecturers by listening to lectures that have been interpreted into English. I will specifically address types of interpreted utterances that appear to have an impact on such assessments.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Three different groups contributed the data analyzed here. All of the participants are members of small, interconnected, easily recognizable communities. In order to preserve the anonymity of the study participants, in this paper, general descriptions of the members of the cohorts



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are included but identifiable characteristics are not divulged. Due to its experimental nature, throughout the study none of the participants was physically present with any of the others. All participants completed IRB-approved written informed consent forms.

The first group consisted of experienced, trained Deaf docents (museum educators) who often present lectures to Deaf audiences in museums in metropolitan settings along the eastern seaboard of the United States. All had postsecondary educations. Each was videotaped on site in a museum presenting a 15-minute museum talk in ASL.

The second group consisted of four trained and certified signed language interpreters (A, B, C, D) who produced simultaneous spoken English renditions of each lecture. All of these interpreters hold certification from RID (two had been certified for fewer than 5 years; two had been certified for more than 5 years). All four interpreters in this study were white, female college graduates. All were nonnative signers who work in metropolitan areas along the eastern seaboard of the United States. Two had prior experience interpreting in museum settings for Deaf lecturers in their respective cities. The other two were familiar with museum talks but had not provided ASL-to-English interpretation in museums.

The final group consisted of museum raters (X, Y, and Z) who regularly evaluate the professionalism of docents at their respective institutions and who evaluated the interpreted English renditions of the original lectures. These raters were all professional women with over 3 years experience evaluating the work of museum lecturers. They did not know sign language.

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### Procedure

Each Deaf docent was videotaped in a museum while reprising a lecture previously presented to the Deaf community. During the lecture there was no audience other than myself as videographer. After each lecture, a separate introductory segment was filmed. In this paper, comments will be limited to discussions of Docent 1 and Docent 2.

The videotaped ASL lectures were shown to four signed language interpreters (A, B, C, D). Each interpreter was presented with written preparatory materials 1 week prior to the date of the study. Upon arrival, each interpreter was given the opportunity to review the preparatory materials again. Prior to each interpretation, the introductory video was



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played. When ready, each participant produced simultaneous spoken English interpretations for each lecture. In postinterpretation interviews, all four interpreters stated that the work produced for the study was reflective of their practice in general.

The museums participating in the study selected their own staff to listen to audiotapes of the English interpretations of each ASL lecture. The raters (X, Y, Z) relied solely on the utterances of interpreters to assess the communicative competence and professionalism of the docents they "heard." They rated the lecturers on indices of (a) knowledge of topic, (b) language use, (c) communicative style, and (d) museum caliber. Because these raters heard four different renditions of the same lectures, at least 6 weeks passed between ratings of each set of interpreted lectures. Qualitative and quantitative data reflecting each rater's assessments of the professionalism of the Deaf docents were collected for each interpreted lecture.

### Data Analysis

The scores and the comments from the hearing raters were analyzed for assessments of the professional identity of the Deaf docents and for the kinds of interpreted utterances that triggered rater responses. The data demonstrated that the language used in different interpretations did indeed elicit distinct assessments of the professionalism and competence of the Deaf docents. For example, Rater X offered contradictory assessments of the knowledge of Deaf Docent 1 depending upon the interpretation she heard. After listening to Interpretation A, Rater X wrote, "Please see comments in II [Vocabulary Use]—they all directly apply here—The lecturer has, at best, a superficial understanding of the art work/exhibition." In contrast, after Interpretation C of this same talk, Rater X stated, "Please see comments about vocabulary—someone who uses that kind of nuanced vocabulary clearly has an understanding of the material." Because the source lecture was the same for both renditions, the only possible reason for such dissimilar impressions was the different interpretations. Clearly, the rater relied upon the language used in the interpretations as the basis of her assessments.

After analyzing for assessments of professional identity, the next step was to examine the interpreted utterances mentioned as problematic by the raters. I identified several different types of utterances that triggered comments from the raters and reviewed the responses for each type.



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Finally, I determined four domains into which the utterances could be categorized. These domains serve as an initial typology.

## Domains

The four domains I suggest are (a) linguistic resources (including precision in language use, setting-appropriate use of terminology, and professional register); (b) discourse level interpretation choices (for languages in which source and target languages do not share discourse norms); (c) markers denoting (dis)comfort with material (fillers, hedges, prosodic markers); and (d) interpretation process artifacts (meaning nonequivalence, unfinished utterances). Interpreted utterances in the first three domains transferred much of the source meaning, but the form in which the meaning was delivered prompted critiques. Only in utterances categorized in the final domain (interpretation process artifacts) did the content of the target language deviate from that of the source. Going forward, I will expand on each of the domains and give examples of the comments made by the hearing museum raters in response to utterance types in each domain.

### *Domain 1: Linguistic resources*

In this chapter, I define *linguistic resources* as language use noted by the raters as having violated expectations of precision in spoken English, appropriate terminology for museum settings, and/or professional register (i.e., the degree of formality appropriate for particular settings). In this domain, *professional register* refers to a style of utterances that raters evaluated that fell within a range of appropriate to overly casual.

Museum raters expressed a preference for professional discourse norms. An expectation of precision in the language of educational talks was highlighted in many rater comments across institutions. Incorrect usage of art- and museum-related terminology was cited as justification for concern about the caliber of the Deaf docents. All three raters expressed comparable sentiments regarding language use that reflected unprofessional linguistic resources.

I begin with terminology. The remarks below from Rater X and Rater Z demonstrate that hearing museum raters have expectations for and evaluate all language produced, not only that which contains setting-specific terminology. In the following statement, Rater Z expresses her response to language that does not meet her expectations of museum talks heard in Interpretation B of the lecture by Docent 2. Her first two



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comments refer to museum terminology, whereas her final comment speaks more to Standard English usage than museum terminology.

> There were several instances of the wrong vocabulary being used: The director of the Met was referred to as an "Art Director" rather than a "Museum Director." Art storage was referred to as a "cellar." In the information about "Whitney's revenge," the speaker stated this was against the "docent" at the Met. This should have been "the director." In the discussion about the grain elevators, the speaker said that they were built to "help American industry." This is very vague and doesn't address the function of grain elevators. I think that "agriculture" would have been a better word choice than "industry." (Rater Z)

There were many criticisms of interpreted utterances that did not satisfy expectations of precision in language. The following example is a critique by Rater X:

> S/he is using generalizing terms (which would indicate s/he doesn't know the material very well). When discussing the Demuth, s/he says, "Remember, we had that idea of industry not being very pretty . . ." This has no meaning, as stated. (Rater X)

The lack of precision in the interpreted utterances leads to an assessment of the docent as not knowing the material, and therefore as less professional. Rater X did not make similar comments to the same section of the lecture when listening to other interpretations, which suggests that her comments were a response to interpreter-authored utterances that do not reflect the institutional level of discourse expected in museum talks.

The next critique is also an example of a comment that addresses preference for language that is precise and meaningful:

> He/she said, "The Tomb of Perneb was the official burial site for Egyptians in the 5th Dynasty," which made it sound like this was the burial place for all Egyptians rather than those who are royal or associated with the Pharaoh. The tomb was also referred to as "the house of death, where people go to die," which makes it sound like the death occurs in the tomb, rather than it being the site of the burial/afterlife. Finally, the *ka* was referred to as "the spirit of the dead," and then later as "the spirit of death." One implies that it's the spirit of a particular deceased person, while the other sounds like a spirit that brings death. (Rater Z)



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The issues mentioned by Rater Z appear to be interpreter language choices, as opposed to choices made by the Deaf docent. The first issue addressed was a misleading use of an article in English. ASL establishes definiteness in linguistic terms other than by the use of signed articles (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980), thus, it may be assumed that it was the interpreter who selected the definite article in English. Similarly, in ASL distinctions between the concepts of "dead" and "death" are not lexicalized, but rather clarified through context and collocation of signs. Considering that Rater Z did not make similar comments in response to other renditions, it appears that this specific critique was a response to the communicative choices of this interpreter and not the source language of the docent.

The third category within linguistic resources is professional register. Rater X responded differently to interpreted renditions of the lectures. Her response to Docent 1 via Interpreter A is quite positive.

> Yes. This is the best I've heard yet because the presenter uses straightforward, clear and appropriate vocabulary. S/he explains terms properly. (Rater X)

In contrast, her response to Docent 1 via Interpreter C is less positive and reflects the impact of casual register on the part of the interpreter:

> The tomb as situated at the original site was "worthless" (suggesting, I guess, that it was in ruins?)—not at all appropriate language. Some of the tombs were in pristine shape, others were "really bad." Again, this is not focused, descriptive, critical language. The Met team tried to "clean this thing up"—"this thing?" not appropriate language. Discussing the figures in the painting in the tomb, "the first guy is . . . the second guy is . . ."—guy? The frequent resorting to this type of generalized, nonexplanative language is something to be avoided. (Rater X)

In that response, Rater X clearly articulates her expectation of institutional talk in museums. The terms she places in quotes, descriptors ("worthless," "really bad") and nouns ("thing," "guy"), appear to be interpretation choices. Other renditions of the same lecture did not incorporate these generalized terms and did not elicit similar critiques from Rater X.

It is worth noting that the comments above reflect an assumption of interpreter as animator, not as author. Even though the voice of each



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interpreter is readily identified as female, both Rater X and Rater Z use non-gender-specific language ("s/he," and "he/she") in their critiques of the caliber of the Deaf docents quoted above. This demonstrates that the raters orient to the Deaf docent as the person responsible for the language they heard. By extension, the raters hold an assumption of interpreters primarily as animators rather than authors.

*Domain 2: Discourse-level interpretation choices*

This domain includes utterances produced by interpreters that closely adhere to source-language discourse style. These utterance types could be considered "intrusion miscues" (Cokely, 1986), in that the utterances transmit the overall sense of the original message, but the form in which they are delivered may include features of the source language. These features carry additional social meaning (e.g., markings of professionalism). In this study, some negative comments about seemingly casual register in the interpreted renditions were, in fact, discussions of norms for professional discourse in museum setting. Although there are many differences in discourse between ASL and English, in this section I shall address constructed dialogue.

*Constructed dialogue* is a role-shifting strategy in which the communicator assumes the role of someone in a conversation. Role shifting in ASL is marked by a perceptible shift in body position from neutral position (straight facing) to one side and a change in direction of eye gaze for the duration of "the role" (Padden, 1986, p. 48). This strategy is found in most registers in ASL (Braga & Talbot, 2009; Metzger, 1995), whereas in spoken English it is found more frequently in casual conversations than in professional discourse. Constructed dialogue occurred in each of the ASL lectures in this study. When interpreters approached constructed dialogue at the discourse level, without uttering direct quotations, the raters made no mention of it. However, when interpretations were more literal and included segments of constructed dialogue in English, raters, especially Rater X, responded critically. In response to Interpretation A, Rater X clearly articulates her expectation of institutional talk in museums:

> At one point, s/he says, when describing the Met response to exhibiting Whitney's works, "Ms. Whitney was like, what, what?" The site is a museum and this person is speaking to museum visitors—s/he is not in a bar chatting with his/her friends. (Rater X)



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This reflects Rater X's ideology that the appropriate language of docents on site is not the casual communication that is acceptable in less formal settings. As a nonsigner, she is unable to appreciate that role shifting is acceptable in professional discourse in ASL and applies norms of institutional English to her assessment of the constructed discourse.

Interpreter C also incorporated reported speech in her rendition of this lecture, and Rater X responded similarly to the reported speech in this interpretation. Although in listening to this rendition she had praised this docent has having "excellent language" and had awarded high points for competence, Rater X mentions her aversion to the use of constructed dialogue being directly reported in English:

> I personally don't like it when lecturers dramatize historical information in a contemporary fashion, for example, the lecturers recounting of the Met's refusal of Whitney's collection. (Rater X)

The interpreted section she refers to includes several turns of constructed dialogue. One example of a direct quotation in the interpretation that triggered the above response is, "What am I going to do with more American artists, pfft, please, we already have plenty that are just sitting down in the basement."

When the interpreters in the study approached the constructed dialogue at the discourse level and produced utterances that did not directly quote the speech in their English renditions, raters offered few, if any, negative comments in the style category. However, interpretations of constructed discourse that were more literal (including role shifting) seemed to be understood by the raters as casual language that did not adhere to their expectations of professional hearing discourse norms. These sorts of interpretations elicited strong responses from Rater X, such as those quoted earlier about Interpretation A, "The site is a museum and this person is speaking to museum visitors—s/he is not in a bar chatting with his/her friends."

*Domain 3: Markers denoting (dis)comfort with material*

Speakers in professional settings such as museums are expected to relate the specialized knowledge they possess to their audience with ease. If they fall short, they are judged negatively, as in the words of Rater X: "The lecturer does not have the proper terminology or understanding of the work to speak articulately or knowledgeably about his/her subject." When relaying information contained in the source language,



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signed language interpreters transmit affect as well as content. This study demonstrated that the manner in which the message is transmitted has power to effect the perception of the originator's identity, in this case, that of the Deaf docent.

Communication with museum patrons is the main task of museum docents. Concerns about interaction led to the museum raters listening for and commenting on prosody as well as content when evaluating the interpreted renditions of the signed presentations. For example, when raters heard utterances in interpretations of Docent 1 that sounded appropriate, their comments about communication style reflected their experience:

> I do like the energy with which the lecturer presented his/her tour. (Rater X)

> Upbeat hello! Hi! Excellent tone! Dynamics! (Rater Y)

Rater Y's positive response to prosody and language use was extended into her assessment of the knowledge of topic for this docent when listening to the same rendition:

> Didn't have to search for words. Word choice always seemed appropriate and specific. Very natural delivery. (Rater Y)

When the prosody of interpreted lectures did not satisfy institutional expectations, the raters responded less positively. Rater Y, who had praised a particular docent for tone and dynamics, offered quite a different response to another interpretation of the same lecture:

> The lecture is clear . . . the info becomes clear, but there seems to be a lot of pauses in this lecture, which causes me to lose focus; though I appreciate the pause in that we get to a very clear idea in the end. (Rater Y)

Rater Y includes a response to prosodic information in her evaluation of the caliber of this presenter:

> Tone feels more forced or rushed—less conversational. Good energy, though—committed—more expressive when tone is more relaxed. (Rater Y)

Markers such as fillers, hedges, pauses, and upward rising tones serve pragmatic functions in discourse, such as alerting addressees to



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the fact that statements may not be accurate or that more information is forthcoming (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Grondelaers, Speelman, Drieghe, Brysbaert, & Geeraerts, 2008; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Interpreters may use prosodic strategies for the same reasons as primary speakers, but recipients who rely on assumptions of the verbatim nature of interpretation may not be able to consistently distinguish the interpreter as the source of the marker. For example, although signed equivalents of fillers such as "um" and "uh" are seen in ASL (David, Emmorey, & Nicodemus, 2011), none of these markers appeared in any of the source ASL lectures. However, the raters made several comments about the use of such fillers in the lectures they heard. Therefore, the fillers commented on by the raters were interpreter-authored utterances. Data show raters attributing most of the markers in this domain to the Deaf docents.

Interpreter D inserted "um" and "uh" relatively frequently into spoken English utterances. The raters appeared to attribute the fillers to the docent, as seen in their comments on communicative style. Rater Y and Rater X commented specifically about these fillers and prosodic cues:

> Less confident tone than others. More stuttering "UH" and "AH" and "UM" with pauses. (Rater Y)

> Sometimes nice and fluid; other times too "searching" (in an "I'm not sure" way). (Rater X)

Raters also noted the marker "you know." Although some ASL interpreters uttered the English phrase "you know," none of the source signed lectures contained it. Some interpreters, however, included "you know" in their renditions, seemingly as filler while searching for a way to complete an utterance, for example, in this section of one transcript of an interpretation: ". . . and many of those individuals, you know, kind of warned him, you know, don't get involved . . ." The interpreters who used these markers most frequently triggered comments about distracting elements from the raters.

One interpreter's repeated use of "you know" led Rater Y to offer advice to the docent:

> "You know"—I noticed this a lot in many tours/lectures—for Educators/Docents. [It is] better not to assume about our audiences' knowledge base and be as descriptive as possible. (Rater Y)



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Analyzing this comment, three separate understandings become clear: (a) the rater attributes the use of "you know" to the docent; (b) the rater understands "you know" as a restatement of what the listeners already know rather than a word search marker; and (c) the rater assesses the docent as not sufficiently professional to avoid using that phrase, and therefore deserving of an admonition. This is a clear demonstration of the power of interpreters to influence the perception of the professionalism of Deaf speakers. The attribution of the filler to the docent rather than the interpreter colors the perception of the Deaf docent, who is now understood to be an individual in need of correction and improvement, rather than a sufficiently competent professional.

*Domain 4: Interpretation process artifacts*

This domain includes types of interpreted utterances that have not already been addressed, such as meaning nonequivalence and utterances that lack cohesion (including repetition, repairs, and other seeming disfluencies). Many of the interpreter miscues enumerated in Cokely's (1986) taxonomy fall in this category: omissions, substitutions, deletions, and anomalies. (Intrusions appear in Domain 2.) The raters did not have access to the source as well as the target language utterances so they were less able to determine when meaning nonequivalence had occurred. However, they had very specific responses to discourse that lacked cohesion as well as other types of utterances that fell in this domain. Most of their responses indicated that the raters attributed the authorship of interpreted utterances to the docents rather than to the interpreters. Rater Y appears to attribute a problematic communicative style to Docent 2 rather than to the interpreter:

> Struggles for words—"uh," "ah," lot more pauses—this may be a result of original lecturer/docent guide branching off / goes on tangents / doesn't complete sentences or thoughts before adding new/additional info? (Rater Y)

Here, Rater Y clearly articulates her assumption that the Deaf docent is producing language that the interpreter faithfully reflects, replete with tangents and unfinished utterances. Because this rater did not have the same response to this docent when listening to other interpretations, this comment demonstrates the impact of interpretation on the assessment of the docent.



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Rater X also offered comments on pacing and pausing when listening to this same rendition:

> Lecturer hesitated a lot—and would begin talking about something only to switch to talking about something else. As if the lecturer had memorized a script and not practiced it. (Rater X)

These comments were not repeated with other interpretations, leading to the conclusion that the prosodic markers of pace, pausing, and "um" and "uh" created a perception of the docent as unprepared or not confident. The hesitations were not present in the source ASL (as mentioned in the section on Domain 3), which means that the interpreter was responsible for the hesitations. The combination of the hesitations followed by changes in subject led the rater to assume the lecturer was unfamiliar with the topic being presented. These sorts of comments did not appear in other evaluations of this docent by Rater X.

In sum, interpreted utterances from all four domains, (linguistic resources, discourse level interpretation choices, markers denoting (dis) comfort with material, and interpretation process artifacts) triggered negative responses from museum raters. Utterances categorized in the first three domains transferred much of the original meaning, whereas utterances in the final domain transmitted content that was not necessarily congruent with the source. Even when the content was transmitted, as seen in utterance types of the first three domains, recipients assigned social meaning to the conversational shape of the message. This interactive meaning often became the basis for perceptions of the identity of the interpreted speaker.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Museum raters based their assessments of the professional identity of the Deaf docents on interpreted utterances. This is problematic when we consider the role of the interpreter (Pöchhacker, 2012), and the interactive nature of identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). It is important to recognize that all recipients in interpreted interactions (both the interpreter and the primary recipient) are engaged in an ongoing construction of the originator's identity. This negotiation of identity is also impacted by recipient-held ideologies of the transparency of interpretation and by recipient responses to certain types of interpreted utterances.

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This study aligns with and extends the work of Cokely (1983) and Lawrence (1998) by elaborating on the mechanism by which the interpreter participates in constructing the perception of the Deaf originator. This work also aligns with Dickinson (2010) in addressing the impact of interpretation choices on shared community membership.

In addition, much of the work in signed language interpretation has addressed the issue of meaning in triadic encounters: understanding source meaning (Colonomos, 1992a); representing source meaning in the target language (Cokely, 1992); the intersubjective nature of meaning in interpretation (Janzen & Schaffer, 2008); and strategies of presenting meaning when the source and target forms differ (Napier, 2002; Napier, 2007). This study expands our understanding of *meaning* to one that is more interactive, incorporating not only the content but also the manner in which it is expressed, and including the identity of the interlocutor whose communication is received via interpretation.

Data from this study reveal recipients of interpretation operating under assumptions of interpretation as a verbatim act. Recipients not only attributed interpreted utterances directly to the Deaf originators, but also relied upon those utterances as the basis for assessments of the Deaf docents' professionalism and institutional knowledge. Such attribution was a contributing factor to varying evaluations of the competence of Deaf docents depending on which interpretation was heard.

Exploration of interpreted utterances and their impact on the recipients will assist practitioners in identifying discourse-level interpreting strategies that are appropriate for professional settings. Interpreters who are familiar with theories of identity construction as well as intersubjectivity may be more sensitized to the potential ramifications of their interpreting decisions in any setting. Discourse style, linguistic resources, interactive norms, presentation preparation, and the importance of disclosure when the interpreter is not representing the originator or the message accurately are all teaching points that can be developed based on this research.

## CONCLUSION

Interpreters' choices when working from ASL into English do contribute to the perceptions of the professional identity of interpreted



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presenters. Following are the major findings from my study of museum raters representing hearing recipients in a professional setting:

1. Museum addressees had no systematic way of identifying which utterances were authored by the Deaf originators and which utterances were authored by interpreters;
2. Museum addressees, seemingly relying upon an ideology of transparency of interpretation, attributed almost all interpreted utterances to the Deaf originators; thus,
3. Language use of interpreters appears to contribute to the construction of the situated identity of a Deaf lecturer on the part of the hearing addressee.

The data underlying Finding 3 reveal that it is not interpreted language in general that elicits responses from professional interlocutors; rather, specific locutions trigger responses. The interlocutors assumed that almost all aspects of the interpreted utterances were a reflection of the level of the communicative competence of the Deaf docents. Museum raters held expectations of institutional talk in museum lectures. Positive evaluations were more frequent when interpreted utterances were within accepted institutional norms, and negative evaluations were more frequent when specific interpreted utterances did not fall within those norms. A typology of utterances to which the raters responded (linguistic resources, discourse level interpretation choices, markers denoting (dis)comfort with material, and interpretation process artifacts) offers an initial response to this data. Further exploration and refinement is welcomed.

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