

A CONVERSATION: WRITTEN FEEDBACK NOTES WHILE TEAM INTERPRETING¹

RISA SHAW
TAKOMA PARK, MD

ABSTRACT: Team interpreting can allow for more effective interpretations, as well as provide a mechanism for learning from experience in order to become more effective interpreters. When two or more interpreters work as a team there is the opportunity for feedback and conversation, including written notes made during the assignment, to which they can later refer back and discuss in more depth. We must know what interpreters are doing in order to teach and replicate the behaviors that are beneficial, and eliminate those that interfere with the process.

This paper reports on research conducted on a set of notes taken by two interpreters over a period of ten sessions. The study examined the content and function of this communication, which provided information that can be useful for understanding the behaviors of interpreters and can provide interpreters with a reliable method for analyzing and reflecting on the task of interpretation. It can also provide interpreters with more options for improving the work that they do.

I. INTRODUCTION

Interpreters often work in isolation, and the work itself is fleeting. They produce an interpretation and then it is over. These two factors make it hard to learn from experience. Since there is no one to provide feedback at the time of interpretation and no way to reproduce the event, unless captured on video, many interpreters find themselves unable to improve. Interpreters need more options for improving the work they do.

Team interpreting, which has evolved in order to allow for more effective interpretations, turns out to also provide a mechanism for learning from experience and becoming more effective interpreters. When two or more interpreters work as a team

¹ This paper was originally written and submitted as a research project which fulfilled course requirements for "Applied Research" at Western Maryland College, 1991. This project was reported on in a presentation at the 1994 CIT convention, and has been revised for publication for the 1994 CIT proceedings.

there is the opportunity for feedback. In addition to verbal feedback, interpreters can also make a permanent record during the assignment, which they can later refer to and discuss in more depth. To date there have been no studies examining the content or function of this communication. We must know what interpreters are doing in order to teach and replicate the behaviors that are beneficial, or eliminate those that interfere with the process. This research is a beginning in that direction.

In this paper I identify and describe a set of feedback notes, in terms of their form, function and content. I believe that this information will be useful for understanding the behaviors of interpreters and will provide interpreters with a reliable method of analyzing and reflecting on the task of interpretation.

Definition of Terms

"Feedback" is defined as a process by which two or more interpreters analyze an interpretation to gain insight into the interpreting process. This is accomplished by observation and description of the interpretation, followed by dialogue between the interpreters. It is a way to identify the behaviors taking place during an interpretation, and serves as a self-assessment tool which can broaden monitoring abilities. The ultimate goal in the feedback process is to enhance future interpretations.

"Team interpreting" is defined as two or more interpreters, who contract for a common interpreting assignment and work together as one unit (a team), in which they are both responsible for the entire interpretation. The work of team interpreters includes monitoring the interpretation, the needs of the interpreters, and the influence of the context (logistics), as well as feeding information (back-up to the target interpreter), and offering and receiving feedback. They discuss and negotiate their working strategies and establish some level of trust and rapport. They are in a position to recognize and work with each other's style, strengths, and weaknesses.

"Effective interpretation" has been defined as "apprehension of the language and comprehension of the message through a process of analysis and exegesis; immediate and deliberate discarding of the wording and retention of the mental representation of the message (concepts, ideas, etc.); [and], production of a new utterance in the target

language which must meet a dual requirement: it must express the original message in its entirety, and it must be geared to the recipient." (Seleskovitch 1978, p. 9). In other words, the interpreter is constantly making decisions regarding: what the interpreter understands the meaning of the source message to be; how to drop the form and retain the deep structure; and, how to convey the intent and goals of the source message while taking into account the overarching context (participants, setting, etc.).

II. METHOD

This project is an examination of a set of notes taken by two interpreters over a period of ten sessions. These notes were a working product at the time; they were not created as a research instrument, and therefore provide natural data.

Literature Review

Diary studies are often used in the field of education, and are based on similar research principles to those used in this study. Diary studies are descriptive studies which offer insights on largely unobservable processes, as do the notes analyzed below.

Schumann & Schumann (1977), recorded their language learning experiences in a log, which resulted in their identification of psychological factors in second language acquisition. Bailey (1981), initially intended only to document her learning strategies, and later found that her entries were filled with affective responses and reactions to the teacher and other students in the class. In looking for significant trends and common themes that appeared in this type of diary, Bailey (1983) points to the usefulness of the diaries as a research tool. Parer (1988) states that this type of study "raise[s] people's awareness of activities and events in a particular setting so that links and parallels can be drawn to inform practice in other settings and contexts" (p. 2).

Whether the specific focus is to explore educational strategies and problem solving techniques as they relate to second language learning strategies, or to other largely unobservable cognitive processes, these studies make it clear that examination of the contents of written entries provides information regarding the behaviors and thoughts of the writer(s). From such information conclusions can be drawn about the processes

they are engaged in. Feedback notes are a natural instrument to which to apply the diary study analytical technique.

Research Instrument

I have kept a file of team interpreting and feedback notes since 1983, all of which were working products, and saved for no specific purpose except documentation. This series of notes represents numerous assignments and settings of varying detail and length. They were recorded between myself and any one of five or six colleagues who happened to be the other team interpreter on that specific assignment.

Once this project had been conceived, I looked through the file of notes and selected the specific set to be analyzed here. The reasons I selected this set were that many factors were constants, which minimized extraneous factors for the project, and allowed for better focus on the note-exchanging process. The interpreters, the setting, and the consumers all remained constant over a period of time.

The interpreters (myself and a colleague, Ron Coffey) were working in a university setting, for the duration of a semester long course that met regularly once a week for eleven weeks in the fall of 1987. (There are only ten sets of notes, rather than eleven, because one of the regular interpreters was not present for one class session.) Each class session met for approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes. The class usually took a break midway through the session. The interpreters spelled each other according to topic and natural breaks. This determined their turn taking in the notes.

The consumer group consisted of one professor and 25-30 students, two of whom were Deaf. The Deaf students made the selection of the team of interpreters. Both interpreters had previously worked with the Deaf students; one of the interpreters had previously worked with the professor. The university provided the course materials to the interpreters. The interpreters read and discussed these materials with each other prior to each class meeting except for the first class meeting. They also talked about expectations for the day's class, as well as any outside factors that might affect their work.

The interpreters had worked in team situations with each other for four years, and had experience communicating through the use of notes during some of their previous

interpreting assignments. They also both had experience with other interpreters in team situations and with the use of feedback notes. One interpreter is a native ASL user, the other a native English user. Both were in their late 20's; one is male, the other female.

Analysis

I established categories in order to describe and analyze the contents of the notes. One item could fall into more than one category; hence, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

I have applied my knowledge, experience and expertise in order to interpret why the notes functioned the way they did.

The categories I looked at are form, function, and content of the notes. "Form" classifies the written entries according to the type of discourse, statement or question. I also noted where there was a response to a previously written note, and when an entry included a quote from the source message, or the product. "Function" classifies the entries according to the reason for making the note. There were times when I was unable to classify the entry, and that is noted. "Content" classifies the entries according to their focus or detail.

The three categories of notes were further delineated according to specific types of form, function and content found in each category; some having sub-categories. The categories and their respective markings are as follows:

FORM OF NOTE

- A. = question
- B. = statement
- C. = dialogue (stimulus for a response)
- D. = source language quote

FUNCTION OF NOTE

- 1. = to offer a clarification or correction
- 2. = to request a clarification or correction
- 3. = to highlight an effective interpretation
- 4. = to mark an issue or topic for follow up

- 5. = to mark a problem
- 6. = to offer a suggestion to remedy a problem
- 7. = to relate interpersonally between the interpreters
- ?. = unable to classify

CONTENT OF NOTE

- a. = linguistic output of the target language (product)
 - a.1. = ASL
 - a.2. = English
 - a.3. = semantics
 - a.4. = structure
- b. = interpretation process
 - b.1. = comprehension (of the source message)
 - b.2. = management (of the task)
 - b.3. = equivalence
 - b.4. = monitor
- c. = information presented (world knowledge, cultural knowledge)
- d. = consumer oriented
- e. = logistics
- f. = the task of this assignment
- g. = unrelated to this assignment
- h. = interpersonal dynamics
- ?. = unable to classify

After the items were categorized, I made a tally of the number of items in each category per turn and per session, and per interpreter and per team; totals were made across turns, sessions and interpreters. I determined the percentage of time each type of item appeared for each interpreter. Four pages of the actual notes are included in Appendix A for reference.

III. RESULTS

In categorizing the entries, I found patterns and trends that appeared in all three categories: the most frequent occurrences of the form in which the items are written; the most frequent functions that the notes play; and, the content that the interpreters paid the most attention to.

Examples from the notes are given below. I have transcribed the examples for clearer reading. An important part of the notes is the way in which the interpreters write back and forth to each other. Because the notes are handwritten they are fluid and allow for interactive dialogue. The interpreters respond to previous comments, they have individual ways of showing emphasis, and their comments do not stay within the boundaries of the lines. They respond to each other by writing on the side of the paper next to the comment to which they are responding, they write in the margins, they write over what was already written, they write sideways, they draw lines and arrows to refer back to a previous point, or tie points together. The handwriting itself carries a great deal of meaning.

Therefore, the content of the notes can not be divorced from the way it looks on paper. However, I am unable to retain many of these characteristics in print, nor can they be reproduced except by copying of the original notes. I have included copies of four pages of the notes for reference to provide an example of their actual appearance (see Appendix A).

Form

A. Question

Both interpreters overwhelmingly had more notes in statement form (183) than in question form (33). An example of a note classified as a statement is "Breaks concentration when we are/aren't being watched," a note in which there is no question. An example of a note classified as a question is "...But does it really transfer?" This is a note in which a question mark and/or question words were present. One entry could have both questions and statements in it. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1: FORM: Number of entries for Questions (A) and Statements (B)

Per interpreter			Percentage		
	A	B	A	B	A=question B=statement
Risa	15	101	13%	87%	
Ron	18	82	18%	82%	
total	33	183			

The type of question varied. Many of the question-form notes were actual questions, requiring an answer:

"...But does it really transfer?"

"... What's your thought on this?"

"Next time [can we meet for longer]?"

Other questions did not require an answer, but draw attention to the item in another way, often suggesting a change in behavior:

"Rhythm?? [Is that a] new sign?"

"... You have many 'hmm's'! Did you know that?"

Some comments had characteristics of both:

"FYI - Lattimer Propp [correction given on spelling of a name]
? VLADAMIR ?"[disagreement about the spelling, but not sure if correct]

"today is strange! [is it] her way of talking? [or is it] our heads?"

"Very interesting! Is it affecting you to work with a lefty? - Your [fingerspelling] of [this] sentence went [from right to left] (from your point of view)

"WATCH+++ (over time) ? [transcription for production of a sign]
[I've] never seen that before

"...is [concentration] or [rehearsal] break[ing] down??? [or is it your] focus of energy? or [visualization breakdown]?"

B. Statement

Examples of statements are as follows:

"Breaks concentration when we are/aren't being watched"

"Looking at book while 'talking' --> losing some message or adding"

"I felt myself stumble!!"

There is no stated reason why the interpreters used statements more often than questions, or whether the use of questions, though less frequent, had any greater significance. From my own experience and discussions with colleagues and students, the less frequent use of questions may imply a degree of comfort between the interpreters so that the interpreters feel confident in what they have to offer, and secure enough in accepting the other's comments without having to qualify or soften their statements. Because these two interpreters had been working together for four years, and knew each other for two additional years, we might also infer that time played a factor in the way they wrote their comments. If this is true, then level of comfort and time working together, as well as the interpreters' ego, must be taken into consideration. The importance of developing trust and understanding as a pre-requisite for an effective exchange of feedback cannot be overstated.

C. Dialogue

Two additional categories, though not analogous to the question and statement categories, were included under the heading of form. The category "dialogue (stimulus for a response)" is when a note was the stimulus for a written response from the other interpreter. This happened (36) times out of the total number of entries (200). (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2: FORM: Number of entries for Dialogue (C)

Per interpreter			Percentage	
	C	total # of entries		
Risa	23	109	21%	C=dialogue, stimulus for a response
Ron	13	91	14%	
total	36	200	18%	

This type of comment received responses that cut across all categories. Some examples are as follows (the response is in bold type):

" [She meant that] chunks [include] 1 line and 1 group of lines according to context."

"Yes, confuse me."

"But does it really transfer?"

"Don't know-need time to analyze it"

"Have some almonds."

"Thanks"

"Uncle R[e]mus is a rabbit in trickster stories - famous children stories."

"OH! deprived child"

Though there is no statistically significant difference, it is interesting to note that one interpreter had more written responses than the other. This could be due to one interpreter wanting to have the written "connection" with the other interpreter, or a hope that the other interpreter would also respond on paper more. It could also be because the interpreter would lose the thought if she/he didn't write it down.

The responses to Risa were more evenly distributed across sessions, than the responses to Ron. 77% of responses to Ron appear in the first two class sessions. This could be in part due to more attention on responding to the other interpreter in the beginning to help set the tone and rapport level, then dropping the response and replacing it with other types of comments once a base had been built.

D. Quotes

The category of "source language quotes" is when a note includes a quote from the source language. This happened (84) times out of the total number of entries (200).

The majority of the source language quotes were used to offer (67%) or request (10%) clarification or correction, or to highlight an effective interpretation (14%). The remaining source language quotes (9%) served to specifically mark issues for later discussion and identify problems. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3: FORM: Number of entries for Source Language Quotes (D)

Per interpreter			Percentage	
	D	total # of entries		
Risa	38	109	34%	D=source language quote
Ron	46	91	51%	
total	84	200	42%	

Using direct quotes appears to be an important strategy. I found this to be true when I looked at the content categories; the interpreters made the majority of source language quotes when the comments focused on either the interpretation process (47%), the linguistic output (30%) or the information presented (18%). This is striking. It shows the value that the interpreters placed on providing an example or description to ground their comments or observations in the concrete. These descriptions and examples not only take away the appearance of judgment or evaluation, but also give the interpreters something tangible to discuss. This is a hallmark of the feedback process.

Along with the importance of being able to describe one's observations and provide examples, the form of the notes also show us that how the interpreters made their comments to each other may be tied to their comfort level in working with each other, and the type of trust and rapport required to work together in tandem. An extra dose of politeness, shown through softening or qualifying statements is not present in these notes. These politeness strategies and "saving face" are not necessary if the comfort level is high. Dialogue plays an important role here. These notes are not simply a recording

of observations, but an interaction that takes place during interpreting, and also lend themselves to continued conversation after the assignment.

Function

The interpreters most frequently used the written notes to give clarification or correction (88). The second most commonly used category was relating interpersonally (45). This pattern holds true for the interpreters individually, and as a team. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4: FUNCTION: Total number of entries for all categories

Total number of entries for function per interpreter

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	?
Risa	43	3	10	12	11	7	28	8
Ron	45	9	14	5	7	5	17	2
total	88	12	24	17	18	12	45	10

By percentage per interpreter

Risa	35%	2%	8%	10%	9%	6%	23%	7%
Ron	43%	9%	13%	5%	7%	5%	16%	2%
Total	78%	11%	21%	15%	16%	11%	39%	9%

1. = to offer a clarification or correction
2. = to request a clarification or correction
3. = to highlight an effective interpretation
4. = to mark an issue or topic for follow up
5. = to mark a problem
6. = to offer a suggestion to remedy the problem
7. = to relate interpersonally between the interpreters
- ? = unable to classify

Most of the items that provide clarification or correction fall into three of the eight content categories. They are the interpretation process, linguistic output, and information presented.

1. Offering Clarification of Correction

Clarification and Correction of (b) the interpreting process refers to information about text analysis, comprehension of meaning, and message equivalence. An example of a note that refers to comprehension of meaning (where the interpreter signed FIELD, meaning discipline, and was given feedback from the partner that it was an actual dirt field that was meant) is:

"'Came out of the field reorganized' - truly field-work, not [the] discipline!"

An example of a note that is a reminder to consider the entire text in order to understand specific utterances (text analysis, message equivalence) is:

"[Remember to look for the] relationship of previous talk [or] no ties from previous statements (i.e.: practical joke, relating to standing)."

Clarification and Correction of (a) linguistic output refers to information about appropriate and inappropriate use of ASL or English. An example of a note on the register and meaning of the signs for 1950's is:

"'In the late 50's'. The informal use of 1950's vs. the consultative [form]
(5=>) vs. ('55<-->'60)."

An example of a note on the use of repetition and semantic choice in ASL is:

"'Telling story, after story' - how [to] differentiate from same story over and over."

Clarification and Correction of (c) information presented refers to information about world knowledge or general information. An example of a note providing background information about a specific well-known incident is:

"KENT State (Ohio - where the cops killed students during anti-war riots-massacre)"

"The book became a best-seller. He retired after that.' (i.e.: he became rich)."

Examples of notes about information specific to word use are:

"Let's talk about the use of [the word] 'narrative'..."

"Verbal deficit = LANGUAGE (any)."

7. Relating Interpersonally Between the Interpreters

Notes made for (h) interpersonal related reasons occurred the second most frequently in the category of function. There were greetings and closing remarks in each of the ten sessions. Each session had at least one "good morning", and examples of parting notes are:

"Have [a] good trip - Safe and beneficial. Bye Bye"

"I'm out of it now - have a good afternoon, dear!!"

"THE END" [of that class session].

Other comments that fell under relating interpersonally are notes that refer to previous and future events and other people:

"see ya Sunday a.m. for sure"

"[working in] court has had a big influence [on how we work together]"

"by the way '411' is [produced] 4 - 11(eleven), have to tell Molly too!"

"Where's Joyce Groode's Helpful Hints to Fingerspell With Rhythm when you need it"

And notes about the two interpreters working together on this assignment:

"This is my day for being out of it, (we each have an allowance of one day), sorry I'm not so dependable today."

"... Did this come up last week?"

"Oops,[didn't mean to confuse you] - my point was that the name isn't important - just the fact that this woman is a famous psycholinguist from Yugoslavia"

"Well, we seemed to understand - 'exuberances/deficiencies'! HURRRAY

"Me and you [need to] work on me taking your feeding. I'm not always sure what you're giving me"

As with the form of the entries, I have not addressed whether the categories used less frequently (i.e.: highlighting an effective interpretation, identifying a problem, and marking an issue for discussion) had any greater or lesser significance than the most commonly used categories of function. Apparently, though these categories represent a smaller percentage in terms of use, the functions themselves play an important role, as they are consistently used throughout the notes by both interpreters.

It is not surprising that there is a heavy focus on offering clarification or correction, since there is always room for improvement, and interpreters are trained to notice that things could be different. Attention to corrections or clarifications is apparently one way to gain insights and provide an opportunity for meaningful analysis of the interpretation. This also provides an awareness to the interpreter of her/his own process. This function directly relates to improving the interpretation by identifying what one interpreter sees as a problem, thereby giving the other interpreter an opportunity to realize and change the behavior if necessary. More importantly, the interpreters can take this identification a step further, and reflect on the decisions that entered into that piece of the interpretation.

The specific feedback an interpreter offers must be prioritized since there is limited time to write notes. If the interpreters keep in mind the goal of effective interpretation, then they may focus their attention on items that will shed the most light

on message equivalence. This would account for the high percentage of clarification or correction comments.

Attention to the well-being of the interpreting team seems to play an important role as well. This may be in part due to the negative connotations and experience associated with the notion of "feedback" in general, and trying to allay any concerns that are brought about that could impede the process. Low stress may also contribute to greater effectiveness; a team of two interpreters who respect and feel comfortable with each other is likely to be more productive than one whose members are at odds with each other.

Content

The interpreters made the most comments in the category of content (Table 5a) about (b)-the interpretation process jointly and individually. The frequency of the remainder of the content area differs between the interpreters, as does the distribution of the comments.

The two most common types of comments made by Ron were in the categories of (b)-interpretation process and (a)-linguistic output. These account for 63% of his total comments in the category of content. (See Table 5a, below.)

The four most common types of comments made by Risa were in the categories of (b)-interpretation process, (c)-information presented, (a)-linguistic output, and (f)-the task of the assignment. These account for 69% of all her comments in the category of content. There is a greater distribution across all categories for Risa than there is for Ron. (See Table 5a.)

TABLE 5a: CONTENT: Total number of entries for content per interpreter

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	?
Risa	20	33	26	12	6	20	12	9	4
Ron	32	48	15	4	4	6	4	13	2
total	52	81	41	16	10	26	16	22	4

By percentage

Risa	14%	23%	18%	9%	4%	14%	9%	6%	3%
Ron	25%	38%	12%	3%	3%	5%	3%	10%	1%
Total	39%	61%	30%	12%	7%	19%	12%	16%	4%

- a. = linguistic output of the target language (product)
- b. = interpretation process
- c. = information presented (world knowledge, cultural knowledge)
- d. = consumer oriented
- e. = logistics
- f. = the task of this assignment
- g. = unrelated to this assignment
- h. = interpersonal dynamics
- ?. = unable to classify

Interpretation process-(b) was divided into the following sub-categories (Table 5c, following): (b.1)-comprehension (of the source message); (b.2)-management (of the task); (b.3)-equivalence; and (b.4)-monitor. Linguistic output-(a) was also divided into sub-categories (Table 5c, following), as follows: (a.1)-ASL; (a.2)-English; (a.3)-semantics; and (a.4)-structure. The comments made often had a specific focus, which was noted. A point of interest about these two categories is that comments were often made referring to both the interpretation process and the linguistic output. A cursory analysis shows that 62% of the time when linguistic output was mentioned, so was the interpretation process (see Table 5b below). In contrast, only 40% of the time that interpretation process was mentioned, was linguistic output also mentioned. This implies that the process is seen as more salient than the output of the process.

TABLE 5b: CONTENT

Relationship of Occurrences of interpretation process (b) and linguistic output (a)

Per Interpreter			By percentage	
	b	a	b	a
b or a	49	20	60%	38%
b & a	32	32	40%	62%
total	81	52	100%	100%

Comments made about the interpretation process-(b) not only occur more frequently than comments about the linguistic output-(a), but they are also the sole focus of entries more frequently than linguistic output-(b). This implies a relationship between the two types of comments. It is difficult to discuss an abstract process, and it may be relatively meaningless to discuss a product that will never be reproduced. However, interpreters can use the product to discuss the process of arriving at the delivery of an interpretation. This is a beneficial tool, and leaves analyzing the product itself available for the purpose of linguistic modification. This is especially important since the product will never be replicated. This operates on the same principle as the use of source language quotes discussed above (See Table 3, above). (Target language quotes would also fall under this same principle, though I did not cover them in this study). (See Table 5b, above.)

Referring again to Table 5c, under the category of interpretation process, both interpreters had significantly more comments in the sub-category of equivalence-(b.3), than the other three sub-categories in this area: comprehension-(b.1), management-(b.2), and monitor-(b.4). This directly relates to the purpose of feedback and the goal of interpretation: message equivalence.

It is interesting to note that not only did the category of linguistic output-(a) occur most frequently when Ron wrote, but also that 100% of his entries were ASL related (a.1=32). Risa produced 15 items that were ASL related (a.1=79%), and 4 that were English related (a.2=21%). It is important to remember that the course was conducted mainly in English, so the bulk of the interpreting was from Voice to Sign, thereby making ASL the more common target language.

Neither interpreter made significantly more comments related to semantics-(a.3) or linguistic structure-(a.4). Both had comments in each sub-category. (See Table 5c.)

TABLE 5c: CONTENT

Total number of entries in sub-categories for content per interpreter

Per Interpreter

	a.1.	a.2.
Risa	15	4
Ron	32	0
total	47	4

b.1.	b.2.	b.3.	b.4.
8	6	17	3
8	11	33	1
16	17	50	4

By percentage

Risa	79%	21%
Ron	100%	0%

23%	18%	50%	9%
15%	21%	62%	2%

	a.3.	a.4.
Risa	11	8
Ron	15	13
total	26	21

a.1. = ASL

a.2. = English

a.3. = semantics

a.4. = structure

b.1. = comprehension (of the source message)

b.2. = management (of the task)

b.3. = equivalence

b.4. = monitor

Risa	58%	42%
Ron	54%	46%

Below are sample comments that fall in some of the categories of content.

Examples specific to the linguistic output are:

"Rhythm?? - new sign?"

"1" 2" 3" 4" 5" can do?-not sure 'WEEK(S)' [questioning production of a sign]

"WATCH+++ (over-time) ? (never seen before)

Examples of comments on the interpretation process are:

"Interesting! Process depth = dramatic change when student questions come up, [since] we don't know where [the students] are coming from"

"After you become re-socialized as a sociolinguist..." [Yes it was] comparative, [which you]

"conveyed in mannerism + adverbs. [But you didn't convey the] meta message [of a] sociolinguist being better-which was her main point."

"When 'speaking' signs, I think we should stick with 'in English it is glossed as...', or something similar to that"

"Good affect (or lack of) for Karen"

Examples of comments on the information presented are:

"Saks, Schegloff, Jefferson" [names and spellings of authors]

"Let's talk about the use of [the word] 'narrative'..."

"Verbal deficit = LANGUAGE (any)"

Examples of comments that were consumer oriented are:

"[We need to discuss the] challenge between teacher and student. (last week)"

"Today is strange. Her way of talking? Our heads?"

"Difference in expectations among consumers.: if not looking, [she] expects it immediately; and, if is looking expects it immediately (i.e.: when I sneezed)"

Examples of comments that referred to logistics are:

"At break we need to move next to her"

"WEEK 9 - Tannen 'Spoken & Written Narrative' - You [target interpreter]?
WEEK 10 - 're-telling' - Chafe 'Repeated Verbalizations' - Me [target interpreter]?"

"[My] meter time is until 1:15 pm"

Examples of comments that referred to the task of this assignment are:

"Maybe we need to get a class listing from [the teacher] to have spellings of the names"

"It worked out okay. And was even beneficial because [the professor] would not have gotten the aspect w/o the interpretation. I'm glad [another student] was here since she saw what [the teacher] wanted, otherwise the interpretation/interpreters could have easily been scapegoated"

"[A student] just asked if we switch every 20 min. (is this what we've been doing? Ha!) I said we don't go by time, but by discourse..."

"Yess! Much more together today! Yup-who we work with makes a huge difference..."

The interpreters also made comments which referred to events or people unrelated to this assignment, to each other, and to interpretation. For more detail, refer to the actual notes (Appendix A).

The greatest number of discrepancies between interpreters takes place in the content categories. This may be due to the interpreters' differing strengths and weaknesses, what they are more insightful about, or simply their different interests. This demonstrates the benefit in having a team which brings together complementary skills and interests. This allows the team to have a broader base of skill and knowledge, and provides more opportunity for growth, as well as more effective interpretation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The two interpreters have created a structure for providing feedback and the opportunity for them to talk directly to each other at the moment of interpretation through the use of written notes. Interpreters need mechanisms and opportunities to learn from their experience and from one another. The description of the notes is rich with information and examples of what two interpreters thought about, and deemed important enough to note and discuss while undertaking a very serious task.

A successful working team requires several qualities: sound communication abilities; trust and rapport; a shared frame of reference; the desire to improve; an ability to analyze the work; and, complementary skills and interests.

The notes show that the interpreters shared a focus and consistency in what they communicated about. Patterns exhibiting what both interpreters deemed important to communicate about in an overall sense appeared throughout the notes. They both used statements more often than questions, unless they wanted a specific response. They did not seem to find a need to soften the statements with qualifiers or with the use of questions. As indicated earlier, this may be due to their comfort level with each other.

Both interpreters used examples, often quoting from the source message and the interpretation, to discuss their points.

The interpreters used the notes for the purposes of providing clarification/correction and relating on an interpersonal level. Emphasis on clarification/correction implies that both interpreters were intent on improving their interpretations and on using analysis of their decision making processes to do this. The fact that the majority of comments from both interpreters were related to the process of interpreting (not the product) underscores the importance of learning to manage the process (decision making strategies), and not simply the product (language use), and being able to talk about it.

The large number of comments of an interpersonal nature implies that keeping the team intact is of great importance. These interpreters depended heavily on one another, and a good rapport and trust not only were essential to the workings of this pair, but were continually reinforced, thereby reducing stress and providing more ability to focus on the accuracy of the interpretation by working together.

These patterns imply that the interpreters share a frame of reference (i.e., a shared theoretical approach to the task of interpreting). Understanding and viewing the task of interpretation in a similar way is important. Without a common understanding and goal, the feedback exchanges may not prove as beneficial. These patterns also imply that certain characteristics are required: a desire to improve; an ability and desire to discuss and analyze the work; an ability to communicate clearly and without judgment; an ability to retain examples to be used for discussion; and an ability to negotiate language and expectations.

The interpreters' different specific focuses in terms of content are a product of their individual strengths, weaknesses, and interests; these different focuses are beneficial to the team and the overall product. Complementary skills of the interpreters is an essential component in a successful team. It provides a sense of balance to the feedback process, and a sense of completeness to the work of team interpreting.

The notes show that some of the feedback is immediately applicable, to this situation and to these interpreters, while much of the feedback will prove useful to the

interpreters in completely different situations. The ability to generalize and carry new information into other situations is what lets interpreters grow and expand. Feedback conversations provide this benefit.

The act of writing seems to require the interpreters to focus, as does the work of team interpreting. For two interpreters working as a team, the focus of feedback is for the good of the immediate work, as well as improving their interpretations in general. The dialogue aspect of the notes plays a major role, as the interpreters depend on one another during the interpretation.²

The appearance of feedback notes varies. Often they are not neat and orderly, nor is their meaning or function easily understandable to someone outside the situation. On the surface they are often cryptic and seemingly unstructured. This is the nature of dialogue. The notes may reflect the density or length of an assignment, the mood or level of trust between the interpreters, or the idiosyncrasies of the individual interpreters. Nonetheless, the appearance of the notes should not be overlooked or trivialized. It presents some very interesting questions (i.e., is the use of cryptic language intentional so that others are prevented from understanding them, or so that the interpreters must discuss them with each other to understand them, or is it simply a function of time and writing notes while paying attention and monitoring and feeding the other interpreter?; what do these different ways of writing say about the relationships between the interpreters?, etc.). This study focuses on the contents of the notes, not on their appearance. Yet, I do not dismiss the idea that the appearance may play an important

² Interpreters can use a similar structure to provide feedback when they are not team interpreting. Briefly, the process between interpreters working together as a team is different than that of one interpreter observing another for the sole purpose of observation and discussion (feedback). The end goal of improving interpretations may be the same, but the means to the end are different and must be taken into account. The focus and responsibility of the people involved is different. When interpreting alone, whether one is observed or not, one is solely responsible for the interpretation, while the person observing is responsible for observing and providing stimulus for the feedback conversation. This creates a different type of interaction during the feedback conversation, which is now separated out from the interpreting process, rather than being simultaneous with it as is the case in team interpreting.

role in the larger picture of feedback work. It warrants attention and consideration as one aspect of feedback, and how it affects the entire interpreting process.

In some respects, this study has raised more questions than it has answered. There are many aspects and implications of the use of feedback notes that have only been mentioned, and others may have gone unmentioned. Further examination of the feedback process and other sets of notes can reveal a great deal about the interpreting process and how interpreters function.

No clear patterns emerged regarding how the focus or amount of entries may have shifted across time. There are sessions in which the interpreters wrote more or less than in other sessions and than each other, but there are no patterns associated with this. The only distinction comes in the first session, in which the interpreters seem to be focused on setting themselves up for the duration of the assignment, both logistically:

"I told her I (we) want one book ordered"

"At break we need to move next to her"

"Maybe we need to get a class listing from [the teacher] to have spellings of the names"

and with one another:

"See other side for comments" (refer back to my responses where you wrote your comments)

"Watching you AND getting your feedback on (ASL) linguistic aspects (everything from perspective to vocab. to...) is going to be very helpful - Thanks!"

"Meet at 9:00 at 37th and Prospect".

An interesting pattern appeared regarding the turn taking of the interpreters and when they made a greater number of entries in the notes. In each class session both interpreters wrote more after they had already interpreted. This pattern can best be illustrated with a chart.

Written Feedback Notes While Team Interpreting

Turn Taking

<u>Interpreting</u>	<u>Writing</u>	
Risa	Ron	1st turn to write
Ron	Risa	1st turn to write - writes more than next turn
Risa	Ron	2nd turn to write - writes more than previous turn
Ron	Risa	2nd turn to write

This implies that the interpreters may have been more focused on the tasks of interpreting and providing feedback immediately after they had interpreted. It also may be related to the fact that these two time periods are in the middle of the assignment, and the lesser amount of writing is due to a "warming up" and "cooling down" periods at the beginning and end of the class session.

There was no pattern evident in terms of who interpreted and who wrote first. Each of the interpreters performed each task first 5 times out of the ten sessions, but they are not in any clear order. Nor did the notes refer to this decision.

Future research could examine questions such as: is what we see in these notes what we would choose to have happen between interpreters? What significant elements are left out of these notes? What elements that are present would be better deleted? How do the types of comments compare with each other in terms of their weight? Which aspects of the notes carry more weight, and therefore deserve more attention? What is the best way to evaluate the notes and overall process? What are the most successful methods for teaching the feedback process?

An even larger question is what these notes say about what we know and hold to be true about interpretation theory? Does this feedback process fit into any of the theoretical frameworks, and if so, how?

I have talked with other interpreters and teachers of interpretation, many of whom have kept sets of feedback notes also. It would be interesting to examine how other notes compare to the notes analyzed in this study. Are the structure and content similar? How are the notes the same or different across different interpreters, or across different situations with the same interpreters?

The more we can learn as teachers of interpreting about the tools interpreters use to enhance their own work, the better chance we have of being able to teach the use of these tools to students. A student who receives instruction and practice in the use of written notes would be better prepared to use that tool in her/his own work than one who is merely told that some interpreters exchange notes while working, or one who is told nothing at all.

I suggest making use of written notes and conversation on paper, as well as the practice of team interpreting, an integral part of your program and classes. Show students examples of notes, these and others. Model this practice for students, do it with them, watch them do it with each other and talk to them about how it feels, what works, what does not work. Encourage students to create their own feedback systems, and share the different strategies in class. Play with these ideas. When this was new to me, both as a student and later as a teacher, it took time to make it work. Give yourself, and your students, time.

Our goal as teachers is to provide useful tools to students to accomplish their task. The more proficient we become at using them, and the more we can learn about how the tools themselves work, the better able we will be to pass them on.

Practitioners and teachers alike can use conversation and the feedback process to learn from their own work and the work of their colleagues. As a reliable method of analyzing and reflecting on the task of interpretation, written notes present a valuable option for realizing effective interpretation.³

³ The author wishes to thank Ron Coffey, Sharon Gervasoni, Judith Treesberg, Jan Withers, Susan McCarn, Maggie Nash, Carol Fay and Diana Tighe for each of the conversations we have had and for generously sharing their thoughts and insights. This paper is dedicated to the memory of Ronald L. Coffey.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLES OF NOTES

- ②
- Good morning. It was good to link up this AM - wish it was longer. Next time 8h.
- 10:15a - Discussion → when do you decide to look at the teacher or book (object)?
- Why do we always get the broken chain?? It rocks sideways. ME TOO
- Good use of space (timing) (definitely non-linear). "Striked with 7 readings, then ~~24~~ the number of students grows, I changed it to 5."
- Let's talk about use of 'Narrative' → not sure if it would be better to go than to do sign for it. Wonder if it makes a difference. But the more she talks, the more I realize it means - other than talking. YUP!
- We are making up 'Introspection' or my also name - But I don't understand it yet.
- ~~It should be~~
- FYI - Lattimer Propp, New Giver (I think). Spelling analysis of self, why do what we do, intrusive behaviors - looking at them.
- GOOD MORNING TO YOU!
- breaks concentration when we are sent watched
- we have a number of issues to talk about and I think we should set up a time to DO IT before we get to detached from it all.
- system of contract HAVE, NOT HAVE, something out of the "regular" not ~~more~~ necessarily opposite, but different.
- Semantics of OPPOSITE?
- Interesting! Process depth = dramatic change when student questions come up... we don't know where they're coming from.

GOOD MORNING!

DISCUSS PRESENT SO-FAR (CAN have those 2 together?) - NO

WEEK 9 - Tanna 'Spoken & Written Narrative' you?

WEEK 11 - 're-telling' Chafe 'Repeated Verbalizations' me?

GOOD MORNING, MA'AM!

• "Maybe someone will do that for their final paper" - in Bauman

- a long smirk / one-sided smile → what's this represent - advice

FYI

• "POETICS, HIS MEAN SAME-directional (as him) US" - reclassification

→ "The way Ken Feld uses the word poetics is the same as mine"

• Good use of what-g. / all time, ex: what is national motive - culture

• Looking at book while 'talking' → losing some message or adding

• Actual quoting in ASL "I've done for 25 years" → given then dropped

no transition or switches in response 'OVERLOOK'

• Very interesting! Is it affecting you to look with a lefty - your

fs. of sentences went rt - lf. (from your point of view)

• 'frequent colloquial' → of word 'goes' > he goes to her. Missed concept

• Relationship of previous talk → no ties from previous statements is practical

relating to standards

• fs. → several (or all) times, assume that when Dr

board, you will look then turn to and fs it. Then proceed with

looks like you are trying to get it in (but no get up), before the discussion

"Lucky you - you will be reading mine" - head turn, squint eyes,

mouth search ... at verb mark

"After you become re-socialized as a sociolinguist..."

comparative - ups, PLUS sociolinguistics = better!

(conveyed in mannerism) + adverbs

meta message

Wayang = "Wing-young" - actual theatre } political use - similar to TV comedy
 / Dalang - narrator

"He must, because he spent time there." (talking about Indonesian shadow theatre)
 "HE GO-GO SEVERAL TIMES - YES" } diff. concepts

"A special frame of mind after 24 hrs. of no food, biological relief and talking the whole time." (ironic!)

shadow = "BLACK, WHITE, GOO-CRAQUE" (Visualizing - ^{maybe during people} _{examined})

• "at least requires minimally" LIMIT + face
 LIMIT = a constraint
 "Minimal" = LIMIT

• Oedipus killed his father & married his mother!
 - too much effort on spelling
 • "orientating people" ← using linguistic term of "orientation" from previous readings

• Causality - EFFECT+++ OR CAUSE+++?
 it didn't feel right. ↑
 CAUSE / effect

• Me & you work on me taking your feeding / you feeding me - we not always sure what you're giving me.

THE END

last class
 (Certified) - Spirit of the times
 "Connectionism" - wave of future?
 - relate to 'abduction' - meaning by association!! Lakoff, George.

OTHER PEOPLE AGREE, DISAGREE. = "The world would not agree."

(with what I do is linguistic) Relation of giving positive/negative condition (i.e. Y/N.g) but answer w/ answer.

→ Also one example; is true interpretation vs. word for word / big difference
 look at TL vs comparison

- Lakoff - (Pragmatics) - unsure (face-2ip expression)

- "Stopped doing (formal) linguistics" - ^{spread out up to} ~~formal~~ LINGUISTICS, - DECO (seems like)

- "They were both ~~locked out~~ / Hypothesis not doing linguistics) UC Berkeley
 "Index 2 for - ~~same name~~ BOTH KICK -

NOT "HARD SCIENCE" → Paradoxical term - ? for (clear on)

Non-native speakers

N.A. FIN. E. LANGUAGE ENGLISH NOT

SPANISH, JAPANESE...

← explaining vs. interpreting

drop-off phenomenon - hummm...
 - voice

in interpretation + HER VOICE

(but not say she tried to talk to σ...)

C or R breakdown???

probably R, because of re-telling story
 or V?? would have it (as opposed to interpreting
 it). Focus of ~~energy~~ energy?

REFERENCES

- Bailey, K. (1981). An introspective analysis of an individual's language learning experience. In S. Krashen & R. Scarcella (Eds.), Issues in Second Language Acquisition: Selected Papers of the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Bailey, K. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: Looking at and through the diary studies. In H. D. Seliger & M. H. Long (Eds.), Classroom Oriented research in Second Language Acquisition, (pp. 67-102). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Parer, M. (1988). Students' experience of external studies. Student diary project. Churchill, Australia: Gippsland Institute, Centre for Distance Learning.
- Schumann, F. E. & Schumann, J. H. (1977). Diary of a language learner: an introspective study of second language learning. In H. D. Brown, R. H. Crymes, & C. A. Yorio (Eds.), Teaching and Learning: trends in Research and Practice (Selected papers from the 1977 TESOL Convention).
- Seleskovitch, Danica (1978). Interpreting for International Conferences. Pen and Booth.

Risa Shaw

Risa Shaw has been working as a freelance interpreter in the Washington, D.C. area for the past 12 years. She has been teaching and leading workshops around the country for the past 6 years; her most popular workshops are on team interpreting and diagnostic feedback. She holds degrees in Interpreting, Linguistics, and Education: Teaching Interpreting.