Transliteration: A Comparison of Consumer Needs and Transliterator Preparation and Practice

Linda K. Stauffer, M.Ed., CSC
Judith A. Viera, M.A., RSC

Abstract

In the field of interpretation, there is a limited body of literature devoted to the topic of transliteration. This paper seeks to add to this body of knowledge by a) reviewing the current research describing what practitioners do when providing transliteration services and exploring whether or not these practices are congruent with what consumers want from such services, b) proposing salient characteristics of English signing consumers with suggested relevance for practitioner competence, and c) reviewing four interpreter preparation curricula and a sampling of U.S. interpreter preparation programs' current practices for information on the approaches to preparing transliteration practitioners.

Definitions

According to Siple (1997), the interpreting profession has been unable to adequately and accurately define transliteration (p. 77).[1] In 1980, Caccamise defined transliteration as working between spoken English and a signed form of English (Caccamise, 1980). Later, Winston described transliteration as a task that involves the reception of an English message and the changing of that message into another form of either spoken or signed English (Winston, 1989). Current authors of texts on interpretation such as Frishberg (1990) and Humphrey and Alcorn (1995) have defined transliteration in broad terms. Frishberg defines transliteration as "the process of changing an English text into manually coded English (or vice versa)," (p. 19). Humphrey and Alcorn define the term as "changing the source language utterance from one form of a language into another form of the same language" (p. 152). While all these definitions shed light on the general task, they do not give direction as to what set of skills are specific to transliterating, or

what constitutes exemplary transliteration services.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) provides certification testing for transliteration. RID has no official definition of transliteration; however, it does have a description of rating criteria for the current performance evaluation for the Certificate of Transliteration (RID, 1996; Certification Council, 1997). These criteria encompass three broad areas of grammar and vocabulary, processing, and mouth movement patterns (RID, 1996). While helpful, it adds little to finding a professionally agreed-upon, descriptive definition of transliteration. Perhaps the best that can be said about transliteration is that it is defined discretely in place and time by the individuals who request and use such services.

Consumer Expectations and Transliterator Practice

What tasks do consumers expect transliterators to perform when requesting transliteration services, and are they consistent with what interpreters do and what training programs teach? There has been very little research into consumer preferences regarding transliteration services. An unpublished study by Viera (1999), a deaf consumer and RID certified interpreter, surveyed approximately 80 deaf consumers regarding their preferences and expectations of transliteration services. Results of this study indicate that while consumer preferences are uniquely individual, there are identified trends among English signing consumers regarding language production by transliterators. Many of these consumers tend to want the transliterator to provide a verbatim rendition of the source message with very little process time delay. These consumers want the message to be complete, without omissions or transliterator "interpretations," as they prefer to make any interpretations themselves. It must be noted, however, that, according to a study by Bailey (1997), some consumers are comfortable with interpreters making selected lexical choices (use of space, conceptually accurate signs) when transliterating as long as the target message is complete, clear, and true to the source message. Generally, these consumers want clear, and consistent mouthing from the transliterator. Are these consumers' preferences consistent with research reports identifying what transliterators actually do?

Siple (1993) describes the task that transliterators perform as "... akin to building a suspension bridge, piece by piece, while simultaneously walking across it" (p. 148). She makes an analogy that the speaker gives the interpreter (or in this case, translitera-

tor) pieces that must be constructed on the other side (i.e., in the target language). If the pieces are correct and strong, the bridge gets built; if the pieces are faulty, the interpreter may repair or reject the material in order not to build a bridge that would miss the mark. Like building a bridge, transliteration is most often performed simultaneously a piece or pieces at a time in order to construct an equivalent product (message) that hits the mark (message equivalence). Although transliteration includes both sign-to-voice and voice-to-sign components, research focuses primarily on voice-to-sign transliteration.

Voice-to-Sign Transliteration

In 1984, 135 participants at the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) conference in Asilomar, California, analyzed the task of transliteration as initially identified in 1983 by a group of seven experienced interpreters. The CIT group identified 39 separate tasks (McIntire, 1986). These tasks included, among others, listening, understanding, analysis, modality switching, vocabulary and semantic searching, audience and speaker assessment, monitoring, decision-making, mouth-hand coordination, and message production. Additional tasks involved memory, responding to feedback, closure, cultural adjustment, monitoring, and ethical search, as well as other tasks.

Some of the constraints of transliteration identified by the CIT group included a) contradictory or inconsistent linguistic, cultural, and affective input; b) insufficient grammatical information to accurately convey the intent of the speaker/signer; and c) lack of shared frames of reference by the signer or consumers and interpreter. Given these constraints, it is suggested that transliterators may have to omit portions of the incoming message, add information to the incoming message, substitute information or lexical items, and adjust/modify incoming information (McIntire, 1986, p. 96).

Winston (1989) and Siple (1993) argue that transliteration is not a simple coding process or a verbatim recoding of the source message; instead, it is a complex process involving strategies borrowed from ASL. Some of the strategies described by Winston (1989) include *conceptually accurate sign choices, addition, omission, restructuring,* and *mouthing. Conceptually accurate sign choices* refers to the transliterator's conscious decision to use a lexical item from ASL that matches the meaning of the English word rather than a straight coding of the English word (e.g., sign SUCCEED for "it doesn't *work* well.").

Included under *addition* are ASL features such as a) use of space to establish a referent, b) addition of a negative headshake to negate signs, c) addition of ASL adverbial markers, and d) facial expression. *Omission* of portions of the source language are used to achieve efficiency in transliteration. For example, tense markers or plural markers and affixes, prepositions not necessary to the message, and pronouns for previously established subjects are often omitted from the target message. *Restructuring* involves changes in longer utterances with the mouthing corresponding to the restructured form and not to the original source message (e.g., changing passive voice to active voice).

Siple (1995; 1996) further studied the use of addition, stating that additions are produced in target messages "to provide supplemental information in recognition that a verbatim message would be incomplete" (1996, p. 30). Siple assigned additions to one of five categories: a) cohesion (additions that serve to link different parts of discourse such as conjunctions, hand indexing, spatial referencing, etc.); b) clarification (an addition that serves to make the source message clearer, such as stating implied information); c) modality adaptation, which visually communicates an auditory aspect of the message such as intonation or stress; d) repetition of a key word or phrase for emphasis; and e) reduplication for pluralization.

Siple adds to the study of transliteration by describing the use of pauses by transliterators (1993). She describes the use of predictable pauses to indicate punctuation points, rhetorical questions, parenthetical comments, interrogative pronouns, and conjunctions (p. 150). Siple concluded that transliterators tend to "show a pause at the same location at which pauses are present in the source message" (p. 171) and that pauses are regularly accompanied by visual representation such as eye gaze shifts and held signs.

In 1995, RID published a list what a person must be able to do to be awarded the Certificate of Transliteration (CT). The three broad categories of variables that raters evaluate include *vocabulary, processing,* and *mouth movement patterns* (Matthews, 1995). Under *grammar* and *vocabulary*, transliterators are evaluated in part on ASL principles applied to transliteration including the use of space for role-taking, characterization, and for subject-object agreement. Under *processing*, transliterators can demonstrate "some restructuring or paraphrasing for clearer conveyance of meaning" as well as "some additions of ASL signs which enhance the clarity of the visual message (modals such as CAN, classifier constructions, indexing and listing structures)." Finally, the

description states, "overriding all of the above details is the requirement that the target message resulting from the transliteration process remain true and accurate with regard to the source text" (Matthews, p. 8). In 1997, RID's Certification Council released a description of rating scales for seven key behaviors an interpreter must demonstrate for the current voice-to-sign segments of the performance evaluation of the RID Certificate of Transliteration. The scales address correct and consistent production of sign parameters, comfort level of sign flow, message equivalence, appropriateness of target language, consistency of facial grammar to the source language, conceptually correct sign choices, and clear and consistent identification of sentence boundaries.

Sign-to-Voice Transliteration

A review of the literature found little insight into the tasks involved in sign-to-voice transliteration. What is available is the description of the RID CI and CT rating scales, which address six key behaviors interpreters must demonstrate for the sign-to-voice segment of the Certificate of Transliteration performance test. These include clarity and consistency of enunciation, comfort level of flow for listening, message equivalence, consistency of inflection to source language, conceptually correct vocabulary choices, and clear and consistent identification of sentence types and topic boundaries (Certification Council, 1997).

The quality of sign-to-voice transliteration depends not only upon the practitioner's skill, but also upon the style and form of the message produced by the consumer. If the consumer's signed language is linguistically complete, the transliterator's task is, conceivably, easier than if the signed language presented is incomplete or presented in a way that is not expected by the practitioner. What are the characteristics of English signing consumers and what impact do these characteristics have upon the tasks performed by the practitioner?

Consumer Characteristics and Implications for Practitioners

Although not a scientific study, the lead author has compiled the following observations about the signing style of many consumers who use English-like signing and who prefer transliteration services. These observations are based on 20 years of interpret-

ing/transliterating experience, from watching videotapes, and from teaching transliteration classes. While not an empirical or definitive study, these observations can be used to identify characteristics and competencies practitioners may need to acquire to provide quality sign-to-voice transliteration services. (See Appendix A). As with any endeavor to identify common trends among groups of diverse people, each characteristic will not necessarily apply to each individual. Any misjudgments belong solely to the authors.

English signing consumers:

a. *May or may not be bilingual.*

English signing consumers may be monolingual English users, or may be fluent bilingual users of ASL and English. Some consumers may use ASL in social situations, but prefer English in professional arenas.

b. *Have a high command of English.*

Consumers who request English appear to be thinking in English. In these instances the consumer's preferred source language is English based on expressive language structure, although some use of ASL may be present. English signers tend to have a strong command of English language, including broad vocabulary choice and syntactical structure. These consumers exhibit facility with register levels, defined as "identifiable variations within all languages which mark the formality or informality of an interaction (Humphrey & Alcorn, 1995, p. 394). English signers tend to sign in English word order; some ASL or English tense markers are typically present, but not all; some English may be on the mouth and not on the hands and vice versa; there is a mixture of ASL signs and initialized English signs; there may be more frequent use of fingerspelling; and there is less concern for precision in the use of conceptual signs (e.g., consumers may sign STAND for "I can't stand that!). Additionally, sign production may be rapid with little facial grammar.

c. *May code switch.*

Code switching is "the conscious or unconscious movement

from ASL into English-like signing or from English-like signing to ASL" (Humphrey & Alcorn, 1995, p. 385). Although most of these consumers' language production is English, there is minimal and sporadic, or frequent and regular, code switching to describe people, events, feelings, reactions, etc. When code switching occurs, it tends to be of brief duration, with the language structure quickly returning to English.

d. *May or may not mouth words.*

Some English signers speak or speak/sign simultaneously for themselves. Of those who do not use their voice, some may have a strong tendency to use mouth movements that mirror the English language they are signing. Others may produce English signing without noticeable mouth movements. Typically, English word mouth movements will drop off when code switching occurs.

e. *May use humor including word puns.*

English signers may include humor in the form of clever word puns or sign puns that play on the signer's unique ability and facility with words and signs.

f. *Have varied educational experiences (assumptions cannot be made based on educational setting); consumers may have grown up oral, hearing, or mainstreamed with English sign systems, or attended residential schools.*

There seems to be a broad range of background experiences, which limits making assumptions based on educational or familial background. English signers may have been born hearing and deafened at a later age, at which time they learned to sign; may have grown up with English sign systems in mainstreamed schools; or may have grown up in a residential setting where they learned both ASL and English signing systems. Some English signing consumers may have grown up oral and consider sign as a support to speechreading.

From a practical standpoint, what requirements do the above characteristics suggest are needed by the practitioner in order to provide quality sign-to-voice transliteration services?

Transliteration practitioners need to:

a. *Acquire a high command of English.*

The transliterator must have a wide knowledge of English vocabulary, including facility with register level. Often a sign with a common gloss is signed but a higher register word is mouthed by the consumer (e.g., sign RIGHT mouthed as "accurate"). Higher register words may also be fingerspelled by the consumer.

b. *Be prepared for the prevalence of fingerspelling and the use of non-conceptual signs, initialized signs, sporadic tense endings, abbreviations, short-cuts, idioms, and puns.*

The transliterator must be ready to read frequent fingerspelling, including abbreviations and short-cuts, and be ready for the use of non-conceptual signs, initialized signs, and production of some but not all tense markers. The transliterator can easily be stumped by the use of English idioms or puns that are not expected (e.g., "which made my toes curl!").

c. *Anticipate more speed and less facial grammar than ASL signers.*

English signers often produce signed language that is fast to the eye, may be lacking in use of space, and may be void of facial grammar. This changes the task for the transliterator, as normal ASL markers that convey meaning may be absent. In these instances, the transliterator must focus almost entirely on the signs alone for meaning. This presents quite a dilemma, since the Viera study reports that deaf consumers expect "verbatim," but do not seem to provide it back to the transliterator. Without adequate marking of sentence boundaries, these signers are not producing complete English, but rather are producing an incomplete string of signs to which the transliterator must overlay grammatical features.

d. *Expect code switching.*

Transliterators must maintain a linguistically broad frame of reference and be ready for incidences of code switching by consumers that may affect the practitioner's processing time. The processing time required for sign-to-voice translit-

eration when the consumer is signing in English may need to be lengthened when the consumer briefly switches to ASL such as in asides, descriptions, or parenthetical comments.

Additionally, other factors related to transliterating skill include the ability to:

a. *Provide voice-over services.*

If the consumer signs and speaks simultaneously for him or herself, sometimes the transliterator is called upon to provide voice-over services for hearing consumers. The transliterator must get into a rhythm with the consumer so the voiced language can be heard by the transliterator, and the voiced-over language can be heard by the hearing consumers...no easy task!

b. *Recognize discrepancies between transliteration technique and consumer preferences.*

It is possible that there is a discrepancy between the processed transliteration that practitioners learn and do as described above, with what consumers want: some consumers want verbatim transliteration without modification by the transliterator. It can be a challenge for practitioners to change the way they process information to a way that may feel unnatural to them. Additionally, transliterators who are also skilled interpreters may find their transliteration strongly influenced by ASL features that may or may not be to the consumer's satisfaction.

c. *Interpret for multiple consumers with varied language preferences.*

Any time a transliterator is providing services to more than one deaf consumer simultaneously, there is always the possibility that the target message may be produced in a way that varies from the preferred mode of each of the consumers. This can be especially difficult when you have an ASL signing consumer and an English signing consumer together.

Preparation of Practitioners

If transliteration is not well defined, if consumers vary in their

preferences regarding transliteration services, and if expectations of consumers are not always in sync with what practitioners do, then how is transliteration addressed in interpreter preparation programs? A national research project (Anderson & Stauffer, 1990) shows that professionals and consumers believe transliteration skills are important for interpreting students to acquire. However, a sampling of interpreter preparation programs (Kelly, 1999) and a review of published curricula shows variability as to how they approach transliterating skills development compared with interpreting skills development, when transliterating skills are taught, and how skills are assessed prior to graduation.

Survey Results

In 1987, the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) funded the University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center of Deafness and Hearing Impairment (RT-31) to conduct a national study to identify key competencies considered by professionals and consumers in the field of interpretation to be most important for interpreter trainees to demonstrate upon completion of an interpreter education program. Of six identified competency categories, interpreting and transliterating skills were ranked number one (Anderson & Stauffer, 1990). When programs were asked about their curricula, 48 of 51 programs (96%) responded that they offered curricula on ASL grammar and vocabulary, while only 34 programs (71%) responded that they offered curricula on Manually Coded English (MCE) systems and vocabulary (p. 23). A concluding recommendation of this study regarding interpreter competencies stressed "acquisition of competencies in sign language variations and visual-gestural codes for English with the goal of achieving at least entry level competency upon completion of pre-service academic training " (p. 90).

Twelve years later, Kelly (1999) at Chapman University, California, conducted a sampling of interpreter preparation programs to ascertain the existing approach to teaching transliteration skills in American interpreter preparation programs.[2] Results of Kelly's survey of 25 programs indicated that 23 of the 25 programs teach a class on transliterating skills. The two remaining programs reported that they do not have a class on transliteration due to limited time in the program, or a philosophical belief that individuals who are competent interpreters are also able to function as competent transliterators.

Of the 23 programs teaching transliteration, a majority teach

transliteration in a class solely devoted to the topic. Eight programs teach transliteration as part of an interpreting class; two programs teach interpreting and transliterating skills together at the beginning of the program but separate them later; and 13 programs teach transliteration as a separate class, generally during the regular semester or quarter (see table 1).

Table 1: Transliteration Class Structure

Transliteration Class Structure	Number	Percentage
Teach transliteration as a separate class	13	56.0%
Teach interpreting and transliterating together then separate later	2	9.0%
Teach transliterating as part of an interpreting class	8	35.0%
TOTAL	**23**	**100%**

Of the ten programs teaching transliterating skills as part of the interpreting class, seven programs devoted 50% of class time to transliterating skills development, two programs spend approximately 33% of class time on transliterating skills, and one program reported spending 25% of class time on transliterating skills (see table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of Class Time Devoted to Transliteration

Class Time Devoted to Transliteration	Number	Percentage
50% of Class Time	7	70%
33% of Class Time	2	20%
25% of Class Time		10%
TOTAL	**10**	**100%**

Regarding curricula and materials for teaching transliteration, 14 programs reported that they create their own curricula, and nine programs state that they purchase and create their own curricula. A wide variety of materials, both written and videotaped, were reported.

A comparison of program graduation requirements for interpreting skills and transliterating skills revealed that competencies were generally assessed in similar ways: class grades of "C" or "B" or better, GPAs of 2.5-3.0 or better, passing in-house testing at a minimal level, or passing at some level the State Quality Assurance Test. Exit criteria for interpreting skills also included assessments by outside raters. This technique was not reported for assessing transliterating skills. Two programs reported they did not test for transliterating skills as a graduation requirement.

PUBLISHED CURRICULA REVIEW

Four published university interpreter preparation curricula were reviewed for this paper. These include the *University of New Brunswick Sign Language Interpreter Training Curriculum* (Baker-Shenk, et al., 1988); the *American Sign Language-English Interpreting Certificate Program* at Northeastern University in Boston, MA (Resnick & Hoza, 1990); the *Master of Arts in Interpreting: Curriculum and Evaluation Procedure* from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. (Johnson, Patrie, & Roy, 1991); and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's *Interpreter Education Degree Programs Curricula Guide to Interpretation: ASL - English* (Taff-Watson & Shaw, 1999). The first curriculum is centered around four non-specifically timed clusters and is not associated with a specific certificate or degree. The last three are associated with interpreter preparation programs that offer a certificate or degree: one is a certificate program, one offers A.A. and B.A. degrees in interpretation, and the third offers a master's degree in interpretation.

The New Brunswick curriculum is an integrated curriculum based on the theoretical models of Dennis Cokely (1985). While an excellent curriculum, it targets interpretation between English and American Sign Language and is not intended to address transliteration between signed and spoken English.

Northeastern's certificate program is designed to enable students to develop the competencies needed to enter the field as generalist interpreters. The program states that:

> "transliteration involves the same cognitive processes as interpretation: attention, comprehension, information processing, and expression of meaning. Therefore, it is taught as a linguistic adaptation or

> variation of interpretation and not as a separate entity. Students who wish to specialize in transliteration will be encouraged to take additional coursework." (Resnick & Hoza, 1990, p. 2).

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock's interpreter education program addresses transliteration skills development in an incrementally tiered approach. At the two-year A.A. level, students are required to take a course in Manually Coded English for Educational Interpreters and address transliteration skills in both the Sign-to-Voice Interpreting/Transliterating course and the Voice-to-Sign Interpreting/Transliterating course. At the B.A. level, in addition to the above-mentioned courses, students address transliteration together with interpretation in the Intermediate Interpreting/Transliterating course and then separately in the Advanced Transliteration: English-English courses. The Advanced Transliteration course includes an English language vocabulary development component, a required mentorship component, and enhanced skills development with more challenging materials than those used at the lower levels.

Gallaudet University's master's degree program in interpretation includes a transliteration component. A four-credit (60 contact hours) course titled "Interpreting English Signing: Dialogues and Monologues" is intended to meet the increasing need for interpreters who can adequately convert meaning between spoken and signed varieties of English. Exit criteria for the program's performance component require, in part, live performances of students' transliteration to and from English, and videotaped selections of students' work in sign to spoken English transliteration and spoken English to sign transliteration.

Of the four curricula reviewed, three addressed transliteration skills development, but in very different ways. One viewed transliteration as specialization beyond the core curriculum. One addressed transliteration skills development in an incrementally tiered approach. One curriculum, at the master's level, included transliteration skill development as part if its coursework. Review of additional curricula may identify yet more approaches to transliteration skill development. Regardless, there does not appear to be a clear or consistent approach among preparation programs or in published curricula for the education and preparation of transliteration practitioners. Conceivably, this could lead to a wide variety of skill and techniques practiced by transliterators,

and may contribute to the lack of cohesion between consumer preferences and transliterator practice.

SUMMARY

The research and literature suggest that transliteration is a complex process whereby the interpreter perceives and understands an English message, analyzes it for understanding, and restructures the message into a source form of English, maintaining integrity of message content and intent for the purpose of facilitating communication between two or more individuals. Studies show that transliteration is not simply a recoding process of word-sign or sign-word production. It involves complex simultaneous processes that happen in fractions of a second. It is dependent upon the clarity of the message sent as well as the skill of the transliterator. By nature, transliteration produces a processed message (i.e., an interpretation) in that the transliterator must make a decision or choice as to the meaning of the message and how it is to be conveyed. It requires incorporation of ASL grammatical principles such as indexing, body shift, facial grammar, etc. It may include additions, omissions, and, at times, restructuring of the form. Consumers' expectations regarding transliteration services can be found along a continuum from straight coding to nearly ASL-like service provision and vary from individual to individual.

Transliterator practitioners face many challenges when providing services to consumers who are deaf and prefer English signing. Consumers' expectations of what transliterators can do, coupled with what some consumers want, may not be congruent with what practitioners actually do. For example, some consumers have been reported to want "verbatim" transliterating. However, studies show that interpreters often add, omit, or restructure the message for clarity and message equivalence. Transliterators can learn techniques for handling the differences between spoken and signed English as well as develop strategies for recognizing the unique characteristics of English signing consumers to provide better transliteration services for these consumers.

There is very little documented evidence as to how the majority of interpreter preparation programs approach the teaching of transliteration to current and future practitioners. A national research project (Anderson & Stauffer, 1990) revealed that professionals and consumers rank interpreting and transliterating skills as number one when looking at desired competencies of graduates of interpreter preparation programs. A recent national sample

(Kelly, 1999) of 25 interpreter preparation programs found diversity in the degree of emphasis placed on transliteration in these programs. A review of four published curricula also shows diversity in the approach to teaching of transliteration.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no one generally accepted, identifiable definition of transliteration in the field of interpretation today, although there are several definitions proposed by individual authors to define what transliteration is or what transliterators do. The effect on individuals who prepare to take transliteration credentialing tests is that candidates are left on their own to synthesize the various definitions and descriptions of transliteration with program training and testing expectations.

Inconsistencies exist between what consumers need and/or prefer from transliterators and what transliterators actually do (the product). Viera's study indicates that many consumers tend to want a verbatim product, while research by Winston and Siple shows that transliterated messages are often not simply coded or verbatim messages, but rather equivalent messages produced by using ASL strategies such as omission, addition, restructuring, etc. Either consumers are unaware of what practitioners actually can and cannot do, or practitioners are unaware of consumers' expectations.

Additionally, there is little program or curriculum agreement on how and when transliteration skills should be taught, and what constitutes exemplary transliteration pedagogy. There is scant evidence that consumer characteristics, expectations, and preferences are a part of transliterator preparation. This suggests that transliteration is, at worst, inadequately or, at best, inconsistently addressed in interpreter preparation programs. The result very well may be transliterators who are not prepared to understand or fully meet the needs of many consumers requesting transliteration services.

Above all, transliterators must recognize, respect, and be responsive to the wide range of preferences regarding transliteration services among consumers requesting such services. The apparent discrepancies between what practitioners are taught, what practitioners do, and what consumers requesting transliteration services expect suggest that more study on this topic is needed. Also suggested is training for deaf consumers to clarify their understanding of the transliteration process.

Topics for further research might include the following:

a) Does transliteration theory and practitioner technique taught today reflect consumers' preferences?

b) How is the practitioner impacted by consumers' expectations, which may or may not be realistic regarding what transliterators can and cannot do?

c) How can evaluation of transliteration skills mesh with consumer needs and expectations as well as transliteration theory taught in interpreter preparation programs to better prepare transliteration practitioners?

d) What is an exemplary, functional definition of transliteration?

Appendix A
TRANSLITERATION

Consumer Characteristic	Challenge To Transliterator	Transliteration Suggestions
Has high command of English, appears to think in English, uses English words, signs in English word order, uses high register, fingerspelling prevalence, signing speed, may be lack of facial grammar, may be lack of use of space.	Some tense markers are typically present, but not all; there can be a mixture of ASL signs and initialized English signs; fingerspelling may be used prevalently; there is less concern for precision in the use of conceptual signs; sign with a common gloss is used but higher register word is mouthed by consumer; abbreviations and short-cuts may be used; may be less facial grammar than ASL users; signed language is fast to the eye, may be lacking in use of space and may be void of facial grammar.	Strive for broad English vocabulary; be flexible in what you see; don't overly question use of ASL signs or initialized English signs; trust what you see if it makes sense. Expect non-conceptual signs at times.
May mouth words, may not.	Some English may be on the mouth and not on the hands and vice versa; mouthing may be dropped during code switching; over-reliance on mouthing may mean missed information when mouthing is dropped.	Focus on the mouth, but also keep full signing space within peripheral vision.
May use humor including word puns and idioms.	Can be unexpected for the interpreter; may knowingly use nonconceptual signs or word plays that are not expected by the interpreter; at times English idioms can be produced incorrectly, causing confusion for the transliterator.	Expect the unexpected.
May code switch.	When code switching occurs, it tends to be of brief duration with the language structure quickly returning to English; used to describe people, events, expressing feelings and reactions, etc.; difficult for the interpreter as it affects processing time; requires different strategies to process and voice English and ASL.	Transliterators must maintain a broad frame of reference and be ready for incidence of code switching by consumers. This requires flexibility in processing time whereby the transliterator can loom closer during English language production, but must be ready to drop back for a longer processing time for ASL production.

Appendix A (continued)
TRANSLITERATION

Consumer Characteristic	Challenge To Transliterator	Transliteration Suggestions
Cannot make assumptions based on educational experience - may have grown up oral, hearing, or mainstreamed with English sign systems, or have attended residential school; may be bilingual or may be mono-lingual.	Consumer may know and use some ASL, others may have oral background and want sign supported speech; monolingual English signers may not know or use ASL structure or principles such as PAH!, referencing, etc.	Know the preferences of the consumer; stay focused on mode consumer prefers.
Voice/voice-over	It is difficult to simultaneously listen to the consumer's voice and to provide voice-over services as well as monitor one's own voice production.	The transliterator must get into a rhythm with the consumer so the voiced language can be heard by the transliterator, and the voiced-over language can be heard by the hearing consumers.
Interpreting for multiple consumers with varying language preferences	Any time a transliterator is providing services to more than one deaf consumer simultaneously, there is always the possibility that the target message may be produced in a way that varies from the preferred mode of each of the consumers. This can be especially difficult when you have an ASL consumer and English signing consumer together.	Ask the consumers to make the decision about which language or mode to use.

REFERENCES

Anderson, G., & Stauffer, L. (1990). *Identifying Standards for the Training of Interpreters for Deaf People.* Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Deafness and Hearing Impairment.

Bailey, J. (1997). *Transliteration - the old fashioned way.* Unpublished paper.

Baker-Shenk, C., Bienvenu, M. J., Colonomos, B., Cokely, D. R. Kanda, J. Neumann-Solow, S., & Witter-Merithew, A. (1988). *Sign Language Interpreter Training Curriculum.* Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: University of New Brunswick.

Caccamise, F. (1980). *Introduction to Interpreting.* Silver Spring, MD: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Certification Council. (Aug/Sept, 1997). Description of the RID CI and CT rating scales. *VIEWS, 14,* 15.

Cokely, D. (1985). *Toward a sociolinguistic model of the interpreting process.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

Frishberg, N. (1990). *Interpreting: An Introduction (Rev. ed).* Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.

Humphrey, J., & Alcorn, B. (1995). *So You Want to Be an Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting (2nd ed).* Salem, OR: Sign Enhancers, Inc.

Johnson, R., Patrie, C., & Roy, C. (1991). *Master of Arts in Interpretation Curriculum.* Washington, DC: Department of ASL, Linguistics and Interpretation.

Kelly, J. (1999). [Transliterating: A curriculum for interpreter preparation programs]. Unpublished raw data from Chapman University.

Matthews, K. (1995). Report on the national testing system. *VIEWS, 12,* 8.

McIntire, M. (Ed). (1986). Task analysis of transliteration and response. *New Dimensions in Interpreter Education: Task Analysis, Theory and Application.* Silver Spring, MD: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Resnick, S., & Hoza, J. (1990). *American Sign Language-English Interpreting Certificate Program Curriculum.* Boston: Northeastern University.

RID. (1996). Defining interpretation and transliteration.*VIEWS, 13,* 19.

Siple, L. (1993). Interpreters' use of pausing in voice to sign transliteration. *Sign Language Studies, 79,* 147-180.

Siple, L. (1995). The use of addition in sign language transliteration. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New York, Buffalo, NY.

Siple, L. (1996). The use of addition in sign language transliteration. In D. Jones (Ed.)., *Assessing Our Work: Assessing Our Worth, Proceedings of the Eleventh National Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers* (pp. 29-45). CIT.

Siple, L. (1997). Historical development of the definition of transliteration. In M. McIntire and S. Wilcox (Eds.), *Journal of Interpretation*, (pp. 77-100). Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.

Taff-Watson, M., & Shaw, S. (1999). *Interpreter Education Degree Programs Curriculum Guide to Interpretation: ASL/English*. Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Viera, J. (1999). *Survey of consumers who use transliterators*. Unpublished paper.

Winston, E. (1989). Transliteration: What's the message? In C. Lucas (Ed.), *The Sociolinguistics of the Deaf Community*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Please refer to Siple's 1997 work for an excellent review of the historical development of the definition of transliteration. Over the years, however, several attempts to define transliteration have been proposed.

[2] For a more comprehensive review of the results of this study, please see Kelly's 1999 study.