

# Translation: Marty Taylor Presentation

Translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

## Clip 1. Assessment Features

Hello, my name is Marty Taylor. I'm from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. I came today to give a presentation to explain my research related to English-to-ASL interpreting and ASL-to-English interpreting. That's my topic. I'm hearing. I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. I moved to California and worked there for eight years as an interpreter, teaching ASL, teaching interpreting. Then, I went to Edmonton, planning to stay for just a year. I've been there for fifteen years now. I interpret there, as well as teach workshops traveling about and having fun. I really enjoy myself and meeting people like you.

About 1989, I began work on my doctorate. My work began by trying to figure out what constituted a good interpreter and what constituted a poor interpreter. What was the difference between those two? Was it that the latter was awkward, clumsy and new and that the former had a lot of experience? A good interpreter still made some mistakes, but the poor interpreter made a lot of mistakes. And it didn't matter if it was ASL-to-English or English-to-ASL. Regardless, there were still a lot of mistakes occurring. During that time, in 1989, I started conducting my research and began determining how to measure interpreting skills. How do you measure if information was transmitted equally in both languages – in English and ASL? And it seemed like many deaf people were suffering and having to deal with the frustration that came with poor interpreters and having the burden placed on themselves to figure out what it was that was actually being said. The situation is one of catching a bit of meaning here and there and having to try and assimilate it. And that was something I didn't want to see. In addition, there were interpreters who were frustrated, as well, with their learning process. They didn't really have a strong curriculum. The curriculum depended on each teacher of interpreting. So that, if there was a good teacher, the education and curriculum was good. But, there were many teachers who were very poor teachers or who had gotten their information second-hand. In terms of published research of skill development, there wasn't any. We had theory, ethics, all of those materials available, but nothing in the way of skill development. You know that we have a few interpreter models for [2:35 ?????] processing, such as Dennis Cokely's and Betty Colonious'. Those models are good and extremely helpful to the profession. One thing is that all of those models require or expect bilingual skills of ASL and English; already possessing those skills, the person can then successfully engage in cognitive processing. Research seems to find too many linguistic problems. With those linguistic difficulties, a translation can't be produced. So, one needs to back up. This was very disappointing to me because I really wanted to work with those models and help to advance the profession to another level. But it seemed that when I looked at different videotapes... for example, using those from the AVLIC, Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada... They have a national certification test that is very similar to what RID has. One difference between them is that RID has



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performance tests for both transliteration and interpretation; you can take both, or take one or the other separately. AVLIC, however, incorporates both of the skills into one test, so passing means you have passed both transliteration and interpretation at the same time. Anyway, when I looked at those videotapes, I was permitted to use the videotapes of all of the people that were applying and taking the exam, for which I was so grateful. So, I looked at and analyzed all of the videotapes. My research first focused on English-to-ASL interpretation. When I looked at that, it seemed that there were so many errors that related to language. It really disheartened me. How could we continue to advance the profession using the cognitive processing models, when in actuality the field was several steps behind in its performance?

In figuring out whether or not the skills present were creating equivalency in the source and target languages, the question was how on Earth do we determine if, in fact, there was equivalency. AVLIC had a passing rate of between 7% to 21%, quite low. That means at least 80% or more failed. Wow, that's really just a small number of interpreters becoming certified. We also looked at RID's statistics, and this was about 1992 or 1993. It seemed their passing rate was higher; they had about 50% passing. When comparing the two. With RID, there was also the fact that the passing rate for transliteration was a little bit higher than that for interpretation. The transliteration passing rate was about 55% and the interpretation was about 47 or 45%. But, that still meant that many more interpreters who were taking the ALVIC test were failing. Why? Those interpreters were experienced. And where were the interpreters who didn't even bother to take the test? Many must have felt that they wouldn't even pass the test, so why bother to take it? And those interpreters weren't even factored into the percentage rate. Obviously, the whole situation was not good for interpreting, for deaf people or for the Deaf and hearing communities, for that matter.

Next, I looked at how we could develop methods for analysis and measurement. First, I came up with a question. The question was "What is the difference between a novice and an expert interpreter?" That was my question. Then, I came up with a test for that, or a measurement. Really not a test; more of a measurement for this question. The difference is what the strengths and weaknesses are of a novice interpreter and what the strengths and weaknesses are of the expert interpreter. Then it was just a matter of documenting all of those strengths and positive aspects of their good work, and then documenting the errors. And expert interpreters had errors in their work as well. Originally, I didn't want to focus on mistakes or errors. I really preferred to set that aside, and rather than looking at mistakes focus on what skills were present. That would be the means for the novice interpreter to learn those skills from the expert interpreter, which would be very beneficial. But, it seemed that I also needed to focus on the errors, as well, because by recognizing errors, one can become a



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good interpreter, too. It seemed that for expert interpreters to recognize their mistakes, it was a way of improving even more. We documented all of the skills and errors and then put all of that information together. Next, we checked with other people who were out working in the field teaching and interpreting and got feedback to find out if we had the right information, that is whether or not we were on track. We got opinions from both hearing and deaf individuals. We went to different national events in Canada and got feedback there about my research. After making some changes, adding information and more explanations about what the skills and errors were, we went back for more feedback. We wanted to get more field-testing and really there are just a few people who could do that in Canada. So, it required going to the United States to get that additional information. We did this two or three times, attending national events to get feedback. Each time we went, we'd make changes and bring it to another group. I myself engaged in discussions with people to get their reactions. I made changes yet again, and when we had fine-tuned it finally published the English-to-ASL interpretation research. The most important part of that research seemed to be the problems that occurred with ASL. There were many major factors related to ASL problems. If that person had the skills in ASL, then there were few problems that occurred with the cognitive processing aspects. Altogether there were eight major features and you can see those in your book. They are: fingerspelling; numbers; vocabulary, or lexicon; classifiers, or SASS; structuring space; grammar; and finally, interpreting. We got all the way through six major factors and had not even gotten to interpreting yet! The last factor, after interpreting, is composure, which incorporates how we look and how we present ourselves. So, altogether, those are the eight major factors. It was really difficult to take this whole array of skills and find out how they all fit and lined up with the eight major factors. It was actually a very difficult task, requiring a lot of trials of moving pieces around and getting feedback in order to make changes.

## Clip 2. English to ASL

One important part of those eight features is that they are divided into two groups: knowledge lean and knowledge rich. I borrowed that terminology from other research related to skill development. And that research was really wonderful. It related to the international Olympics and diving. The first training for the divers is lean, meaning simple. They are skills that any person can learn. For example, they teach divers that first they must look at the water in the pool. And that's actually true. Many times divers will practice in the same pool every day for years and will sometimes dive without looking at the water. This wreaks havoc on their performance. Looking at the water is an instance of what they call a knowledge lean skill. Another example is being able to adjust the spring on the diving board, whether or not you make it very springy or very stiff. So, they learn those basic principles. This can be applied in the same way to interpreting.



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Fingerspelling is a lean skill, in that it can be learned in a very short amount of time. This is true for numbers as well. These are skills that are less challenging than others. Vocabulary is another lean skill. We can always learn more vocabulary, but it's easy enough for me to teach you one sign, let's say "simple" in Canadian sign [demonstrates sign]. You can copy me; that means "simple." It's not really difficult for you. The fourth feature of classifiers actually falls into both the lean and rich categories. One example of a lean classifier would be the classifier used for a vehicle, a person standing, buttons, etc. Static classifiers such as this you can learn fairly quickly. On the other hand, classifiers that incorporate movement, that do something, or that incorporate facial grammar are much more difficult. So, within the classifier spectrum, those fall into the rich category. All the other features we listed, like grammar, are rich skills. This is a rich skill because you must have appropriate grammar throughout all of your interpretation. Fingerspelling only has one aspect to it and it only comes into the interpretation every now and then. Fingerspelling isn't present throughout your entire interpretation. Grammar, however, is always there and it has to be in line with all of the information. And then of course, the sixth feature, interpretation is a rich skill. Lastly, the composure feature we could call a rich or a lean skill. But, we put it into the rich category because it also again is present all of the time. It can be quite a challenge for an interpreter to not laugh when the speaker is telling a joke, for instance. Or, to not be playing with one's hair or glasses or something like that. Nervous habits can often be a problem. Those are the eight major features for English to ASL interpreting. Well, actually there is one more: structuring or use of space! Classifiers had the overlap of both lean and rich categories and classifiers require the use of space. Use of space is actually a very rich category. For instance, if you were explaining that someone had surgery on their back, where exactly it occurred and so forth incorporate the use of space. It's a very important feature. So, grammar, interpreting, composure...ok. Those are the eight major features. Each of them has their own set of skills within the feature. There are maybe ten to twelve skills related to each one of those major features. For instance, with fingerspelling we talk about pace and whether it is slow or fast, too fast or too slow. You may be wondering what that means exactly. I did not have that particular skill in the first printing, but did add it later on. Many deaf people really expressed a lot of exasperation with fingerspelling always being so slow. They were sick of interpreters fingerspelling at a snail's pace and that people would get the idea that the deaf person was stupid because of that. They were expressing that the fingerspelling was too slow for that situation. My name is a bit odd, so it may be something that should not be fingerspelled too quickly because it would look like "Mary," potentially leading to a lot of misunderstanding. In that particular context, with an odd or unique name, it is appropriate for the fingerspelling to be a bit slower. But it depends on the situation. And some people have never learned to use different speeds depending on the context, or who the deaf client is, and so forth. They have not



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acquired this skill of adjusting and adapting. For example, if there is a new word, and it is a very odd word such as “tsunami,” the waves and swells that occur after an earthquake under the ocean. The large wave that results can completely destroy an island. That’s sort of an odd word, “tsunami.” As an interpreter, perhaps the first two or three times I would fingerspell that a bit slower, and then after that pick up its speed. That’s a skill that needs to be learned.

Numbers has its own set of skills that go along with it. One example of a skill in that feature would be using the correct number incorporation for different number systems. For instance, two types of signs for ‘first, second, third’ or the signs for ‘once, twice, three times’ have different meanings that go along with them. You don’t use the same number incorporation for each of those situations. Some interpreters use the same number incorporation of ‘first, second, third..’ across the board for all translations, but actually it’s much more complicated in using the correct number incorporation for various number systems. English is a bit simpler in this respect, but ASL is actually very complex. Some people have never learned all of those number incorporation systems. So, if you were using the examples of “I’m first” and “You’re second,” and signed ME-NUMBER-ONE and YOU-NUMBER-TWO, that could be alright, I suppose. A deaf person could understand it, but it is not a great interpretation. Using numbers correctly is significant.

And, of course, we are always learning more vocabulary. Much of that depends on the age of the deaf client, where they are from, their background and experiences, and their education. All of those impact the vocabulary we select in making a good fit. I would incorporate the deaf client’s use of vocabulary and match up my interpretation appropriately. If they were not used to my particular signing, I would try to accommodate and possibly eliminate some things to make it much clearer. If the situation was an important meeting or a doctor’s visit, for example, perhaps the deaf client is nervous. I would try to make selections based on their vocabulary so as not to possibly increase the stress that they are under.

The fourth feature, classifiers, has some of the same situations. An interpreter sometimes may not know the difference between the classifier used for ‘button’ or ‘hole,’ for example. As a result, they sign something to the effect of “Oh, you have very pretty holes down your shirt,” rather than producing the correct classifier and referring to the buttons. Of course, the deaf person can likely figure out that the interpreter means to sign buttons and just shrug it off. But some deaf clients may not know that and may actually believe from the interpretation that the statement is about holes, not buttons. Some people may not know, but even if a deaf client is able to figure it out, they will still look at that interpreter as someone who really needs to work on and improve their classifier usage.



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An example for the feature of using space would be an instance where interpreters sometimes follow English word order, placing signs in the order of the words. Let's take the example of "Yesterday, I had an operation on my head" with a translation of YESTERDAY, ME OPERATION ON HEAD. And while that is understandable, it would be clearer to sign YESTERDAY and then produce the sign for surgery on the actual location on the head, so that the sign is inclusive. The sign for operation incorporates the location on the head, as opposed to producing discrete signs placed in English word order. Space changes are additional skills under Use of Space. If the dialogue is about a house and I sign that I am walking through the door into the house, now I am actually within the house. Sometimes an interpreter will then sign describe the rooms in the house and set up a hallway in space, say over to the right for example. They will continue to have everything come off of that hallway to the right, as if they are walking down this continuous, endless hallway. They don't know how to make changes with the space so that they can have the room right in front of them in their signing space.

Errors with grammar can occur either with individual vocabulary or at the sentence level. An instance in which an error in grammar might occur with vocabulary could be an overuse of the tongue coming out a bit and resting between the lips, which carries the meaning of carelessness or not paying attention. This can be overused without that actual meaning being there. Perhaps the actual terminology that is being used is "to be careful" or "to exercise care." Small details such as this must be analyzed. It can be something that is very minute or subtle, yet can radically change the meaning. The sentence level is indicating the grammar that occurs on the upper portion of the face. In the statement, "If I were to go to the store, I would buy milk," when that sentence is signed in ASL there is a lifting up and dropping down of the eyebrows. But if the interpreter produces it with eyebrows staying up throughout the entire sentence, it actually makes it look like a question rather than a statement. So, I look like an imbecile by asking myself this question about what I will do if I go to the store. The eyebrows going up and down in the correct movement and sequence is very important.

The other major feature is interpreting. An example within this category might be an instance where one is interpreting, going along, signing things correctly. But, one questions where exactly the meaning is within the interpretation. Is the interpretation being linked back to something that was being said previously? How will the interpretation reach a conclusion, or be finalized? Let's see... For instance, I start a conversation and give a slight hand wave. Or, I throw my hands up way up in the air and sign "Ready!" The latter is not exactly right. The interpreter must be appropriate and professional in doing this.



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Another example that would fall under the interpreting feature is passive tense, such as the English sentence, “John was hit by Mary.” In ASL, signing JOHN HIT MARY does not have the same meaning. It would seem right with those signs in that order. But, it’s not. You need to have John established in space and Mary established and then Mary taking action and hitting John in ASL. So, that means in an English to ASL interpretation, you have listen and there has to be some wait time before you can produce the ASL interpretation. The English can really affect the overall meaning and it needs to be transmitted appropriately.

Composure and appearance is the last of the eight features. This relates to our clothing, whether or not we have body piercings and to what extent. Tongue rings, by the way, can be very noisy. They click against the teeth, making a lot of noise, as well as being a visual distraction. This category covers the appropriateness of appearance. Also within the feature is one’s management and control of signing, including how errors are corrected and how a connection is made with the audience. If there is more than one client, this would include whether eye gaze is evenly directed at both individuals. My eye gaze should go back and forth between the two of them, rather than only focusing on one person. That’s part of being well composed.

Another categorization is called “severe,” and this means if a deaf person cannot get the information at all from that interpreter. There may be an error that happens frequently, but is not severe because it does not affect the message. It could bother the deaf person, but the information can still be understood from that interpreter. For example, throughout the entire interpretation the interpreter is pushing their glasses up again and again. That happens frequently and is bothersome, but the information is still there and is understandable. That is an example of frequency. Another instance is frequent fingerspelling errors that are “fixed,” such as signing “CU” and then self correcting with an apology, “Oh, no, sorry, I mean UC” over and over again. If I do that five or ten times, you can still understand my interpreting even though it is frequent. Severe means the information is not there, or that the interpretation has strayed from the actual source message. Even if it just a little bit astray, this still constitutes a severe error because the meaning is not there. One example might be the presenter saying “69” and in my interpretation I sign “65.” That’s wrong. The interpretation has strayed from the actual meaning and the deaf person cannot get the information, or they have the wrong information. Also, it is not something that they can fix themselves for the interpreter. The example used earlier of a classifier being used incorrectly and signing holes instead of buttons is another instance where the interpretation is wrong. The deaf person might be able to understand it anyway, or they might not. That’s a matter of judgment whether it falls into the severe category. An instance in which the original meaning has very much been skewed in the interpretation is the example used previously of



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eyebrows incorrectly being up throughout the statement “If I go to the store, I will buy milk.” The error makes it look like I am asking a question, rather than making a statement. With the eyebrows up during “If I go to the store...” and down during “I will buy milk,” that indicates I am telling you a statement of my intention to do something. Having the eyebrows up throughout the entire sentence is a question, which has an altogether different meaning. The deaf person may then be wondering if they should be answering this question or if the question is being addressed to them. You can imagine the result if the situation of the error with the eyebrows occurred involving a teacher or a doctor’s visit. In this example involving the eyebrows, the meaning is not clear and the error would therefore fall into the severe category.

## Clip 3. ASL to English

The second part of the research involved ASL to English interpretation, and that started around 1994 and has continued to 2001. I’m not sure who is signing it “twenty-oh-one.” Perhaps you sign it “two-oh-oh-one.” We must investigate more about that and find out the variations by region. Anyway, in my area, it seems like people are signing the year as “twenty-oh-one.” The research was published in 2001, which means that the research was actually conducted in the four to five years prior to that. The research that was published and disseminated has six major features in it. Again, the problems we found occurring most were with ASL, which is nothing new.

The first major feature talks about comprehension of ASL lexicon, that is just the vocabulary. Can the interpreter understand the vocabulary being signed? That’s it. The second feature involves the comprehension of ASL discourse. Can sentences and paragraphs be understood? Moreover, can everything be linked together in a cohesive interpretation? So, we haven’t actually gotten to interpreting yet. It’s simply a matter of comprehension up to this point. The third major feature involves whether the interpreter can produce appropriate spoken English, and that is just at the vocabulary level. This involves the selection of words and if they are an appropriate fit to the deaf speaker’s signed message. English discourse is the fourth major feature. This category includes the sentence and paragraph level and having it all fit together cohesively so that the interpretation is equivalent to the deaf speaker’s source message. In other words, is there an equivalency of meaning there? And that’s a very important piece. The fifth feature is related, but is actually a little bit more in depth. The fifth feature relates to public speaking skills. Let’s say, hypothetically, that an interpreter has all the skills in the first four features, but their voice maybe has a nervous tone to it, or the vocal quality is too soft for the hearing members of the audience. Perhaps, they are speaking well and getting all the information into their interpretation, but they are stopping and pausing in the wrong places for English discourse. They are pausing in more of an ASL format, which is quite



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different from English. If they are stopping in conjunction with the pauses in ASL, the hearing audience is going to be somewhat disconcerted by this. The sixth feature is the same as the last feature in the first book. This is the composure and appearance feature. These are the same in that it speaks to appearance and dress being appropriate. Sometimes, an interpreter may feel that because they are sitting in a position where the audience can't see them the manner in which they dress is not really important. Or, they may feel they only need to dress well from the waist up, where they are most visible and therefore, it doesn't really matter what their shoes look like. For example, in Canada, in Edmonton, winters are bitterly cold and we get a lot of snow. Often, boots are needed and so sometimes an interpreter is stuck wearing Indian type boots that go up the calf and have the fringe across the top. During an assignment, maybe a deaf person would ask a question and the interpreter would be required to stand up in front of the audience, rather than sitting out of view. Now, they are in full view and what they are wearing is not appropriate for the situation. So, it's important that clothes be appropriate. This goes for different body piercings, as well. In addition, we must have control over our voice. If the speaker is telling a joke, it's not appropriate to laugh first. The spoken interpretation must be given and then one can laugh. If a mistake is made, saying "oh, shoot!" out loud is not alright. One should not say that. Rather, one should maintain a level of composure and appropriately and professionally fix the error with a brief statement of correction.

Just as in the first set of research of English to ASL, there are lean and rich skill categories within this research as well. Of the six features, there are three that are lean: ASL comprehension of vocabulary, comprehension of ASL dialogue...Although, this one is very difficult, an interpreter must be able to do this first as a basic skill before being able to actually engage in interpreting. So, it's a lean skill. And finally, English vocabulary. The last three features are categorized as rich skills: English discourse, public speaking, and composure. The research between the first and second books is very similar in that they each categorize lean and rich skills, as well as the fact that within each major feature is a particular set of skills. There are a set of errors that go along with each skill and errors are categorized as being frequent or severe, or both. Sometimes, they can be both. Similar to the first set of research, we analyzed each error to determine if it was frequent or severe, i.e. whether or not it changed the meaning. If the meaning is not changed, then that is still acceptable under a frequent error, as opposed to severe.

So to sum up...just as I commented on in the beginning, in the profession of interpreting, we are not bilingual yet. We are still weak in ASL skills. There are some weaknesses that exist in English, too, but ASL is more significant of a problem. That is where most of the interpreters encounter difficulties. This is not



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true for all, mind you. We have many good interpreters. The problems that come up, though, seem to be related to ASL the majority of the time. From the first research, English to ASL, and the second research, ASL to English, there was a span of five years and there were still the same problems present. The problem was with ASL skills. So that means in five years, or actually ten years over the total course of the research, we haven't really improved much. Our potential to measure and evaluate those skills and errors, however, has increased. This is also true for the potential to instruct students, engage in discussions with others in the field, and exchanging feedback with deaf individuals. By doing each of these, we can improve in our ASL skills and become better interpreters by making significant improvements. That means greater success for all of us, as well as a greater degree of satisfaction. And that is really the goal after all, to achieve equivalency in both languages so that ASL and spoken English are both produced fluently, regardless of who is talking. So, just try your best.

You may teach or are a mentor to another interpreter, to students, or what have you. You may be deaf or hearing. As a mentor, you can use the research and the book. When you understand clearly the major features and all the skills that relate to them, along with the potential errors for each skill, then you can help that interpreter become better at understanding those skills and analyze their work. They can understand what problems might exist. They may think that they are interpreting something correctly. But, when you look at each skill one by one from each major feature, then you and the interpreter or mentee can look at work and determine if that one particular skill or error is there. Then, you can move onto another, going through each one individually to see if they are present in the work. With the definitions that are in the research, it is really helpful to see within the work whether or not the meaning and the message are clear. And that is very helpful to the student. If you are a deaf interpreter this is perfect for you, because most of the problems are occurring with ASL. You can use it in one of two ways. An interpreter can just focus on signing and practice those skills without interpreting. You can give them feedback on their ASL. Or, they can be interpreting and you can provide feedback about their ASL. Most of the first book is about ASL skills. Therefore, you can really analyze and go into depth with any one skill. One word of caution is that it is very tempting for most of us to pick out and find the errors in the lean skills, or the simple things. This is especially true for students. It's easy to identify errors such as the fingerspelling is not clear, or numbers are not right, or vocabulary, and the like. But, really try to work on the rich skills. These are very important. If they can improve on the rich skills, such as use of space, this will really help them achieve equivalency with both the languages. In the same way, they can watch a deaf person signing and using space skillfully, and they will understand it more clearly because they have already analyzed their own work in that way. Another way that you can use the book is to ask students to analyze samples of good interpreting first in order



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to identify various skills and patterns that exist. It looks right and the information there is correct. Then use the breakdown that occurs in the book to correspond to what they are seeing on that sample of signed work, such as 1C or 5D for example. Try to see if they can identify those skills that are broken down in the book and find them being used in a sample of ASL. If they can't identify them being used by a deaf person, they won't be able to use them themselves. So, that's a good place to start, too.

Mentoring is really wonderful if you can have a deaf and hearing team of mentors. This is valuable for a few reasons. First, a deaf person can see different things that the other mentor might miss. The hearing interpreter can monitor for message equivalency and the deaf person can talk about information equivalency. There can be a mutual sharing of knowledge. If there are two mentors, they can learn from each other, as well, and improve in their own work. Also, they can both provide feedback to the student, who can then improve even more.

We've already discussed frequent vs. severe errors, and lean and rich skills. What you really want to focus on are the rich/severe errors. What skills, if there is improvement, will actually improve their interpreting? If they fingerspell more clearly, that will nominally improve an interpreter's performance. But, use of space or inappropriate grammar is much more significant. A lean area, such as fingerspelling, doesn't really require your focus. Of course, it is something to be pointed out and interjected here and there, but it's not an area of focus. Rich skills, like use of space, include being able to understand it both receptively and expressively; that is, being able to understand a message that is heard and then producing a correct interpretation of it in ASL by using space correctly. Rich and severe involves anything that skews the meaning and these are the areas to focus on. Similarly, sometimes people will use those books and follow them like recipes. I don't recommend that. If an interpreter has a few things come up here and there, that is not really a problem that requires using the research. What you want to look for are patterns, something that happens several times or frequently. If it comes up once or twice, it is not really an issue. However, if it is something that is frequent, it needs assistance in order to be corrected. The books are not like recipes, then. The research is there to help provide clarity and explanations in order to engage in dialogue.

You might recall, I commented about panel reviews and field studies with very skilled interpreters who had been certified for many years. They looked at the research, as well as other groups that I had look at my research. Each time I'd bring it back to make changes and revisions before bringing it to another group. I went through this many, many times, making revisions. Just prior to finalizing



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Translated by Kathryn Bennett, MA, CI

and completing the research, I wanted one final group comprised of both deaf and hearing individuals to review the material. All of them were evaluators of interpreter videotapes. I wanted the group to watch videotapes of the same two interpreters, one who was certified and another who was not certified yet. I think the interpreter who was not certified had two or three years of experience. The first interpreter had something like twelve years experience, at that time. The group watched at the videotape and looked for each skill and error, rating it one to four depending on the frequency or severity of it. This was not a group discussion, but rather each person rated the skills and errors individually on a form. I then collected all the forms and it was very interesting to see the results. The top heading of the form had all the major features. Underneath them were each of the skills that fell within that feature. It seemed that there was a consensus among the group about the skills, about a 50-60% agreement rate. What they agreed most on were the lean skills, such as if fingerspelling was clear or if numbers were used accurately and those type of things. There was pretty much an agreement amongst everyone, 50-60%, in those skills areas. In the rich skills, there was much less of an agreement. That was something like 34% or 25% agreement on a rich skill. So, they didn't really agree on how to rate those skills. It's important to understand that when a skill was listed, it had below it all the possible errors. There was a high agreement in that area. Also, for the certified interpreter there was almost 90% agreement in ranking for all of the areas, on average. Of course, some of the averages were a bit lower and others were higher to almost 100%. For the interpreter who wasn't certified yet, it was still very good. For that interpreter, there was an 85% agreement rate with the errors. On the skills, however, there was more vagueness, such as 50% clearness, or the grammar was right, or the sentences were correct. But what about the sentences was correct? That kind of information was not necessarily there.

It seemed that as a group of professional interpreters, we can learn more about how to analyze those rich skills and come to more of an agreement about evaluating them. That is the research I have now begun. And we'll see if that research is helpful to our field and help the field really advance and take off. We are just at the beginning of that. But soon, we must really make some changes and continue to conduct more research. I hope that with that our field will really thrive. If not, then what will have been my purpose in all of this? What is interpreting for? Everything up to this point will have not have been worth our time.

