

## Interpretation and the Explicitation Process

To date, there has been several studies on how sign language interpreters make changes or alterations to their target texts (TT) in ASL (Cokely, 1992; Livingston et al., 1995; Napier, 2005; Russell, 2002, Stone, 2009). These have shown that sign language interpreters add or clarify information (Livingston et al., 1995; Stone, 2009), substitute or omit some propositions (Cokely, 1992), or add an implied non-lexical function or implied meaning (Russell, 2002). There has been little work, however, on how they interpret into spoken English when faced with an ASL source text (ST). To address this, Klaudy's (1998) taxonomy of obligatory, pragmatic, translation inherent, and optional explicitation was used as a model to study the work of interpreters. The concept of compression was also reviewed as a process noted by many translation and interpretation researchers (Klaudy & Károl, 2005; Molina & Albir, 2002; Nida, 1964). Some strategies were identified as strengthening the propositions for an audience based on the operational definitions of this process in the literature (Carston, 1996; Sequeiros, 2002). Others were seen as weakening the utterance, thus requiring the audience to do more cognitive work to determine what was said or implied (Carston, 1996; Kamenicka, 2007; Molina & Albir, 2002). This model was then used as part of this study to investigate the two research questions:

1. What alteration do ASL-English interpreter make to a target text when working from ASL into spoken English?
2. How can these alterations be characterized?

Twenty-two certified interpreters volunteered to interpret 4 short ASL texts into spoken English. A research team then used a combination of grounded coding in an analytic-inductive approach and Klaudy's (1998) taxonomy to code the changes they made in their texts. Inter-rater agreement was high and fell with the range of 86.96 to 93.66 (mean of 90.43%). Discrepancies were then discussed and re-coded as needed. Given that interpreters often work in virtual realities and with a myriad of consumers, they interpreters were not given a specific audience but instead told to interpret for a general consumer into spoken English.

The findings of this study can be broken down into three shifts in the English target texts of the interpreters away from the structure of the ASL source. These included explicitation, compression, and shifts in reference. Table 1 provides examples in a simplified gloss and English translation of the types of explicitation strategies identified in the data.

Table 1. Examples of explicitation in the data

Aspect	Story	Source Text	Target Text
Coordinating Conjunctions	Secretary, line 3 Appendix A	I ARRIVED (center)	L: <b>and</b> once I arrived,
Determiners	Engineer, line 11, Appendix B	YOU WORK DO DO (on right)	S: And what does <b>the</b> work look like?
Discourse Marker	Secretary, line 17 Appendix A	I BCK,	C: <b>finally, when</b> I came back from the restroom
Phrasal Verb	Engineer, line 5, Appendix B	<b>MEET</b> (on right) <b>THERE</b> (on right)	V: <b>I came across</b> an engineer.

		ENGINEER POINT (to engineer)	
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Table 2 outlines some examples of the compression strategies used by the interpreters and Table 3 provides examples of shifts in reference.

Table 2. Examples of compressions in the data

Aspect	Story	Source Text	Target Text
Agentless Passive Voice	Secretary, line 5 Appendix A	<b>POINT (to secretary)</b> TOLD- ME (left to center) WAIT LONG WILL	N: and I was told [ <b>by someone</b> ] that I would have to wait a really long time
Object Deletion	Secretary, line 15 Appendix A	<b>ASK (to secretary)</b> WHERE BATHROOM WHERE?	C: and asked [ <b>them</b> ] where the restroom was.
Speaker Stance	Engineer, line 9, Appendix B	<b>OH-I-SEE (to right)</b>	[ <b>omitted</b> ]
Verb Compression	Secretary, line 19 Appendix A	<b>POINT (to secretary) CL:1 (come up to me)</b> (from left to right) TOLD-ME (from left to center) MEETING START SOON	C: they [ <b>came to me</b> ] told me that the meeting would begin promptly

Table 3. Examples of shifts in reference

Aspect	Story	Source Text	Target Text
Role for Pronoun	Secretary, line 18 Appendix A	<b>POINT (to secretary)</b> CL:1 (come up to me)(from left to right)	A: ...the <b>receptionist</b> approached me
Indefinite Pronoun	Secretary, line 18 Appendix A	<b>POINT (to secretary)</b> CL:1 (come up to me) (from left to right)	Q: uh <b>someone</b> came up to me
Superordinate for Pronoun	Secretary, line 11 Appendix A	<b>CL:1</b> (approach center, turn, move back left),	C: So, the <b>person</b> left.

A discussion by the researchers of the potential impact and role of these changes found that most of the strategies were optional and many strengthened the utterance. Obligatory strategies included the addition or clarification of conjunctive devices, such as “or” between compounded verb phrases or the addition of determiners such as “the.” In the ASL source texts, “or” was represented by a pause and could have been translated as “or” or “and” and so this would have to be “figured out” by the interpreter. The definite article “the” was not represented by a lexical item such as a POINT, and so nouns could have been prefaced with the indefinite article “a/an” or “the” as both made sense in context and so the interpreter would have to again decide which to include. The reduction of verbs such as “meet,” “chat” and “ask” into the one verb, “ask” could have been for stylistic (optional) or for pragmatic reasons, as the verb “to ask” entails the “meeting” and perhaps “chatting.” Including phrasal verbs such as “came across” made the text sound more like colloquial English to the researchers instead of using the translation equivalent “met” for the ASL sign MEET.

In conclusion, it was found that ASL-English interpreters in this study typically made changes to their target texts in spoken English. These usually involved explicitation and

strengthened the utterance and most could be considered optional. The types of changes are in line with the Klaudy's (1998) taxonomy and so have been noted in translation or interpretation work between other language pairs as well. Students of interpretation, where they are not directly being taught these strategies, may benefit from targeted instruction.