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Tracking The Development Of Critical Self-Reflective Practice Of A Novice Sign Language Interpreter: A Case Study

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Cover Page Footnote

This study was originally conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Masters of Translation and Interpreting at Macquarie University, under the supervision of Jemina Napier.

Tracking The Development Of Critical Self-Reflective Practice Of A Novice Sign Language Interpreter: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to track the progression of a novice interpreter's use of self-reflective practice while interpreting a series of six University lecture segments, in a controlled environment over a period of three months. It became evident that the novice interpreter in this case study was able to articulate a variety of coping strategies used, and found improvements in her self-reflective practice skills. The results of this study support key suggestions in the literature: that interpreters need to be motivated to aim for expertise by improving their skills through self-reflective practices, via supported environments such as ongoing mentorship, training and professional development.

This longitudinal case study was developed as a multi-methods qualitative study that triangulated three forms of data (quasi-experimental, ethnographic, and retrospective), comparing the novice interpreter's performance through observations from both the researcher and the participant. A rubric (Appendix 1) was designed based on a variety of assessment tools and taxonomies related to interpreting, and used to track the participant and researcher perceptions each session. This case study has contributed to the field of interpreting in that very few case studies to date have focused on novice interpreters' self-reflective practices over a period of time.

INTRODUCTION

In Australia, sign language interpreters are accredited by the National Authority for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), alongside interpreters of other spoken languages (Bontempo & Levitzke-Gray, 2009). Interpreter training is a fundamental route to preparation for student interpreters to gain accreditation from NAATI. Bontempo and Levitzke-Gray (2009) provide a comprehensive overview of current interpreter training and testing in Australia and make suggestions for future education and training for Australian Sign Language (Auslan) interpreters to further consolidate their skills and expertise in interpreting. This includes sufficiently equipping novice and student interpreters with a diverse range of skills, including reflective practices to continually evaluate, refine, and enhance their interpreting proficiency.

Estimations of the number of deaf people in Australia, who use Auslan and also regularly utilize

and require Auslan interpreting services, range from 6,500 (Johnston, T., 2004) to 15,000 (Hyde & Power, 1992). In contrast to this demand of interpreting services, there are approximately 890 NAATI accredited Auslan interpreters Australia-wide; 768 accredited at paraprofessional level and 120 accredited at professional level (Bontempo & Levitzke-Gray, 2009)¹.

Due to a vast under-representation of accredited professional level Auslan interpreters nationwide (Bontempo & Levitzke-Gray, 2009), many accredited Auslan interpreters at the paraprofessional level are regularly being offered and accepting jobs that are classified by NAATI as professional level jobs².

Dean and Pollard (2005) describe interpreting as a 'practice profession,' that is, interpreting practitioners continually make careful considerations and judgements to ensure effective communication to satisfy the consumers' needs on the job. Studies in the United States also suggest that interpreters need to be equipped with the appropriate linguistic and cultural skills to interpret accurately (Johnston, S., 2007; Roy, 2000). These studies have indicated that when interpreting students are engaged in regular opportunities for reflective practice and learning, student interpreters can successfully integrate into the interpreting workforce (Cokely, 2005; Johnston, S., 2007).

These findings can be applied to the Australian context by ensuring that opportunities for self-reflective practice are encouraged at both paraprofessional and professional interpreting levels. Over recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on formal interpreter training worldwide, specifically focussing on the benefits of reflective-based learning, such as internships (Johnston, S., 2007); service learning (Dallimore, Rochefort & Simonelli, 2010; Shaw & Roberson, 2009); mentoring (Pearce & Napier, 2010); and deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2010).

Auslan interpreters can become accredited either by passing the appropriate level of NAATI test or by successfully completing interpreter training courses that are offered in both community colleges³ and universities. Paraprofessional level interpreters are encouraged to attend continual professional development and to also achieve professional level accreditation. While further study is available and encouraged in Australia by Australian Sign Language Interpreter Association (ASLIA), the professional interpreter association, this level of professional development is still undertaken at the discretion of the interpreting practitioner.⁴

¹ Paraprofessional level accreditation identifies interpreter at this level to work in general, non-specialist dialogue settings, and professional level accreditation suggests interpreter competence to work across semi-specialised settings such as: law, health, social, medical.

² See <http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Misc/Outliness%20of%20NAATI%20Credentials.pdf>

³ In Australia, part-time interpreter training is offered in Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFEs), i.e., community colleges, at Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels for paraprofessional and professional level accreditation respectively. Macquarie University in Sydney and RMIT University in Melbourne are currently the only NAATI-approved programs that offer training to Auslan interpreters at postgraduate level. See Bontempo & Levitzke-Gray (2009) for further discussion of interpreter training in Australia.

⁴ NAATI currently requires all accredited T&I practitioners to maintain their skills by providing evidence of regular PD, training, and experience. All practitioners who were accredited after

For a practitioner to reach expert levels of performance, the individual must be exposed to complex skills and competencies in order to develop the ability of self-reflective practice, and should not rely on experience alone to improve levels of performance (Ericsson, 2006). Thus, urging practicing interpreters to engage in regular professional development and self-reflective practice to further develop their skills to effectively meet the needs of the participants in an interpreted assignment is paramount.

This case study aimed to identify the potential gaps in the self-reflective practice of an Auslan interpreter practitioner, and to explore how the strategies could be used by student and novice Auslan interpreters and could be embedded into interpreting course curricula in Australia. This longitudinal case study contributes to the field of interpreting studies, as there are no previous case studies in Australia that have focussed on the novice interpreter's progression of self-reflective practice over a period of time.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

This section will discuss and compare various perspectives on achieving expertise and several adult learning theories that support the importance of engaging in self-reflective practices to further develop an individual's skill in their chosen profession.

EXPERTISE

Historically, there was a school of thought that expertise was born from innate abilities (Feldman, 1980); however, more recently, theorists propose that achieving expertise is due to long-term learning, progressing through deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2004; Ghonsooley & Shirvan, 2010). An individual can only achieve expert performance if they are highly motivated to do so (Ericsson, Roring & Nandagopal, 2007).

For an individual to achieve expert levels of performance, engagement in deliberate practice programs must be over a long period of time and not just a one-off event. Ericsson (2006) and Gruber (2001) both suggest that an individual is likely to reach expert levels of performance in their field of work after approximately ten years of experience and by engaging in continual, meaningful professional development. Lenburg (2000) discusses implementation of self-reflective practices within the medical profession, which are now mandatory and routine programs that have been specifically designed to further develop the practitioner's skills and competence. While Lenburg's (2000) paper was written specifically about the medical profession, the importance of introducing self-reflective practice could certainly be integrated into the sign language interpreting profession, particularly in the Australian context.

Interestingly however, Gruber (2001) states that while an expert's ability to memorize new information may not necessarily be better than that of a novice, the expert has greater capacity to

2007 must apply to revalidate their credentials every 3 years. See:
http://www.naati.com.au/PDF/Booklets/Revalidation_Information_Booklet.pdf

utilize their acquired skills to develop strategies to retain information. This could also be applied to the Australian interpreting profession as Liu et al. (2004) suggest that more experienced interpreters may not necessarily have a stronger ability to memorize new information, but more effective coping strategies in place to produce more faithful interpretation true to the meaning of the text.

ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

Many theorists have acknowledged that adults acquire new skill sets differently than young people (Kennedy, 2003; Seidel, Perencevich & Kett, 2005; Van Gog, Ericsson, Rikers & Paas, 2005), by focussing on learning that is meaningful and has relevance to the individual's life experience. Although various theorists utilize differing terminology, adult learning theories typically focus on outcomes that provide the individual with a sense of achievement (Parson, 2001).

Ongoing deliberate practice and critical-thinking strategies embedded into training curricula provide students with the opportunity to effectively apply skills in practice through many different types of strategies, such as self-assessment, meaningful directed activities, and enhancing and consolidating their critical skills (Halpern, 1998). Individuals should be assessed via exposure to real-life situations and problems that challenge their existing concepts and build upon the individuals' experiences (Finn, 2011; Henschke, 2011).

The assessment of adult learners in the higher education context should focus on the progression and development of knowledge, understanding, and skills through problem based learning strategies (Melton, 1996). Problem Based Learning (PBL) is an experiential approach to educating and enhancing an individual's learning by simulating workplace contexts, active learning, and cooperative peer-to-peer interactions (Sobral, 1995).

Several interpreter researchers have proposed that interpreter training curricula should provide a combined structure of community and service-learning, creating interaction between the individual and the community that interpreter graduates will serve to complement the theoretical practices delivered through interpreter training (Monikowski & Peterson, 2005; Quinto-Pozos, 2005; Shaw & Roberson, 2009). Collaboration between tertiary organizations, interpreting agencies, and Deaf community could greatly benefit the future of Auslan interpreting in Australia.

METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS

The skills an individual must possess to engage in metalinguistic awareness are inquiry and argument relating to any particular activity (Kuhn & Dean, 2004). That is, individuals need to develop critical thinking skills, thus creating awareness and reflection regarding their own thinking and awareness of other individuals' reasoning.

Various recent studies (Magno, 2010; Molenaar, Van Boxtel & Slegers, 2011; Napier & Barker, 2004) have explored the metalinguistic awareness of interpreters while simultaneously interpreting. In order to develop metalinguistic awareness, students need to be encouraged to

reflect upon and evaluate their activities, which will in turn heighten their interest and provide motivation for completing activities (Kuhn & Dean, 2004; Molenaar et al., 2011).

Napier and Barker's (2004) study focussed on sign language interpreters' level of metalinguistic awareness of omissions during an interpreted event. Results of the study showed that the ten professional level Auslan interpreters, averaging ten years of experience in the field, possessed high levels of metalinguistic awareness during the interpretation process. The participants were able to articulate why omissions were made, and through the interpreter self-reflections, the authors developed five generalized categories of omissions.

While there is debate as to whether or not an omission is an error in the interpreting process, more recent research has emerged positing that omissions may in fact be a strategic decision that the interpreter has made (Napier & Barker 2004; Pym, 2008) aligning with the aims of the communicative act without jeopardizing the source text meaning. Evidence also shows that interpreters possess high levels of metalinguistic awareness, particularly after a combination of mentoring and experience in the interpreting field (Magno, 2010; Napier & Barker, 2004), thus strategic interpreting choices should be specifically taught in interpreter training programs.

INTERPRETER TRAINING

While there is vast research on expertise and adult learning theories, assessment of translator and interpreter performance is relatively under-researched (Ghonsooley & Shirvan, 2010; Hetherington, 2012; Moser-Mercer, 2008; Sawyer, 2004) and still at an exploratory phase, particularly in the Australian context of sign language interpreting.

Sawyer (2004) states that interpreters need to be exposed to self-reflective practice and theoretical frameworks at the instructional level to potentially reach expert levels of performance. Morell (2011) investigated metacognition as a paramount aspect of undergraduate training for interpreters and translators, as well as the continuation of practical and theoretical training through postgraduate studies. As Morell (2011) states:

'...interpreting requires a fully-fledged mastery, not only of the languages directly involved in the process, but of the themes or cognitive fields being interpreted as well...(2011, p. 108)'

The development of metacognitive intercultural communicative competence (MICC) is necessary for the trainee interpreter to personally experience and understand the full dimension of the problem oriented nature of the whole interpreting process in every new situation (Morell, 2011, p. 116).

As interpreters are required to master effective 'on-the-spot' strategic decision-making, Morell (2011, p.108-9) suggests that current interpreter training curricula still lack elements of effective metacognitive and self-reflective practices. Therefore, it is essential that further research into adequately designed sign language interpreter training curricula is conducted and continually reviewed.

It is critical to note that literature clearly suggests the need to improve the status of interpreters working in K-12 settings (Stewart & Kluwin, 1996). Educational interpreting is an area where interpreters generally work alone, without team interpreters to provide valuable feedback. Most educational interpreters are employed by the Department of Education and Training (DET) in primary and secondary educational settings in Australia (Judd, Lewis & Bontempo, 2013). DET remuneration packages are not highly attractive for professional level Auslan interpreters, and therefore, unqualified or graduate interpreters often successfully obtain their first contracted employment in the educational setting. Winston (2005) suggests that due to lack of experience, the graduate interpreter's competence to assess their own skills may be lacking and that they may therefore be unaware of their weaknesses, resulting in unconscious incompetence and ineffectively taking on work beyond the individual's skill level.

This highlights the need for self-reflective practice to be explicitly taught to student interpreters before they gain accreditation; thus ensuring that the student interpreter has comprehensive strategies to effectively work in a wide variety of assignments. Bontempo and Napier (2007) have challenged the historical assumption that individuals improve their competence through innate talent and suggest that novice interpreters are unaware of what to look for in regards to skill development. Winston (2005) also suggests that novice interpreters might not possess the skill set to judge whether they are competent to take particular jobs due to their limited experience and possible lack of self-reflective skills.

Swabey (2005) suggests the current situation for interpreter training in the United States is that most curricula focus on the basic level of training, leaving little or no time for effective use of self-reflective strategies via 'real-life' experiences. Monikowski and Peterson (2005) also note the concern that interpreter training has shifted from being community based to being delivered solely in the classroom and that student interpreters are not gaining adequate access to the Deaf community. Recently, however, in the United Kingdom and United States, there have been a few studies conducted to explore new initiatives in delivering practicum experiences and service-learning programs within formal interpreter training courses (Shaw & Roberson, 2009; Johnston, S., 2007; Monikowski & Peterson, 2005) with positive results. Many of these initiatives are still in operation and could be adapted to encourage interpreting practical experience across Australia.

These service-learning programs have had positive outcomes, comparable to the success of mentorship programs (Pearce & Napier 2010) and graduate internship programs (Dangerfield, 2011) that have been piloted in Australia; thus revealing that reflective methods and models for interpreters are essential for skill development by engaging in deliberate practice and critical thinking. Using purposeful sampling, Dangerfield's study (2011) sought to gain perspectives from representatives of five peak stakeholder groups regarding interpreter training and the viability of future provision of practical experience workshops, mentoring, and internships in Victoria, Australia. The stakeholder groups were representatives from NAATI, an interpreting agency, graduate interpreter, interpreter program lecturer, and a mentor program convenor. Each representative was personally approached and asked to complete a survey to elicit perceptions about mentor programs and internships for graduate sign language interpreters. From the stakeholder representative survey responses, the results indicated a general consensus regarding the need to bring the needs of the Deaf community to the forefront of interpreter training through

further development of sustainable options for interpreter training practicum, ongoing mentoring, and internships for graduate interpreters.

This present case study builds upon Dangerfield's (2011) preliminary study of internships through further investigation of the progression of self-reflective practice and critical thinking skills as a case study of a novice interpreter residing in the state of Victoria, south-eastern Australia. Another aim of this case study was to develop recommendations for interpreter practicum training to be embedded within curricula for future interpreting students.

The goal of this longitudinal qualitative case study was to explore:

- a) Whether a novice interpreter demonstrates self-reflective capabilities.
- b) Whether a novice interpreter develops more self-reflective capabilities over a period of time through regular engagement in guided self-analyses and coaching

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This case study aimed to track the engagement of one Auslan interpreter participant in self-reflective practice under controlled conditions over a period of time. It was designed to collect evidence of both the interpreter's progression in terms of competence development and shifts in her self-reflective skills.

This study was designed as a multi-method, qualitative study to triangulate three forms of data collection:

1. Quasi-experimental: comparing the interpreter's performance across a series of tasks and under the same conditions;
2. Ethnographic: observation of the interpreter's performance; and
3. Interviews: retrospective, reflective, interviews with the interpreter participant.

PARTICIPANT

The participant responded to a call for expressions of interest distributed by three Auslan interpreting agencies in the state of Victoria, Australia, to accredited interpreters who had less than two years interpreting experience. The criteria outlined in the call were as follows:

- The candidate will be a newly NAATI-accredited paraprofessional interpreter with less than two years of experience in the field.
- Ideally, the candidate will not have had previous mentoring and will not have been involved in graduate programs, nor be enrolled in any advanced interpreting programs at university.
- The candidate will be able to commit to fortnightly interviews for a period of three months.

After the email was disseminated, one response was received. The interpreter matched all of the criteria; however, she had been involved in casual reflective discussion groups led by an experienced interpreter. Although the interpreter had experienced some form of casual group mentoring, she was the only respondent, and therefore, it was expected that her experience would be reflected in the data.

PROCEDURE

The participant and lead researcher met fortnightly at a set time in an office space where the interviews were conducted for approximately one hour each session, with six interviews in total. At each meeting, the participant interpreted, from spoken English into Auslan, a 15-minute segment taken from a series of University lectures obtained from the Open Yale courses online⁵. A different lecture segment was used for each session.

The overall subject of the lecture series was ‘The Psychology, Biology and Politics of Food,’ presented by Kelly Burnell. While this lecture series is from the United States, it provides a comparable representation of subject matter that interpreters will likely encounter at a university assignment in Victoria, Australia. Also, it is typical for Auslan interpreters to interpret mostly from English into Auslan at university assignments (Napier, 2002), and therefore, the scope for this case study focussed on the single interpreting direction from English into Auslan.

The segments were played on a laptop and positioned so that the participant could view the PowerPoint presentations. Each session was filmed for the purposes of later transcription and analysis. Immediately after interpreting the segment, the participant had the opportunity to play back the recorded interpreted segment and make notes regarding her recollection of self-reflective practice while she was engaged in interpreting and filling out a rubric (Appendix 1) that was created for analysis.

On completion of the interpreting task, the participant and researcher engaged in a retrospective interview with a series of reflective prompt questions that were developed from key constructs identified in the literature. These questions were:

- How did you prepare for this assignment?
- Overall, do you think this was a successful interpretation?
- What did you notice from the interpreted recording?
- What strategies did you engage while interpreting?
- Did you see any English intrusions (Cokely, 1992)?
- Where there any additions (Cokely, 1992) or omissions (Napier, 2004)?
- What were the demands of the job (Dean & Pollard, 2001)?
- What controls did you have in place (Dean & Pollard, 2001)?

Following the retrospective reflective interviews, the interpreting and interview data was assessed against a variety of diagnostic tools such as Cokely’s (1992) miscue analysis, Napier’s (2004) omission taxonomy, and Dean and Pollard’s (2001) Demand Control Schema (DC-S).

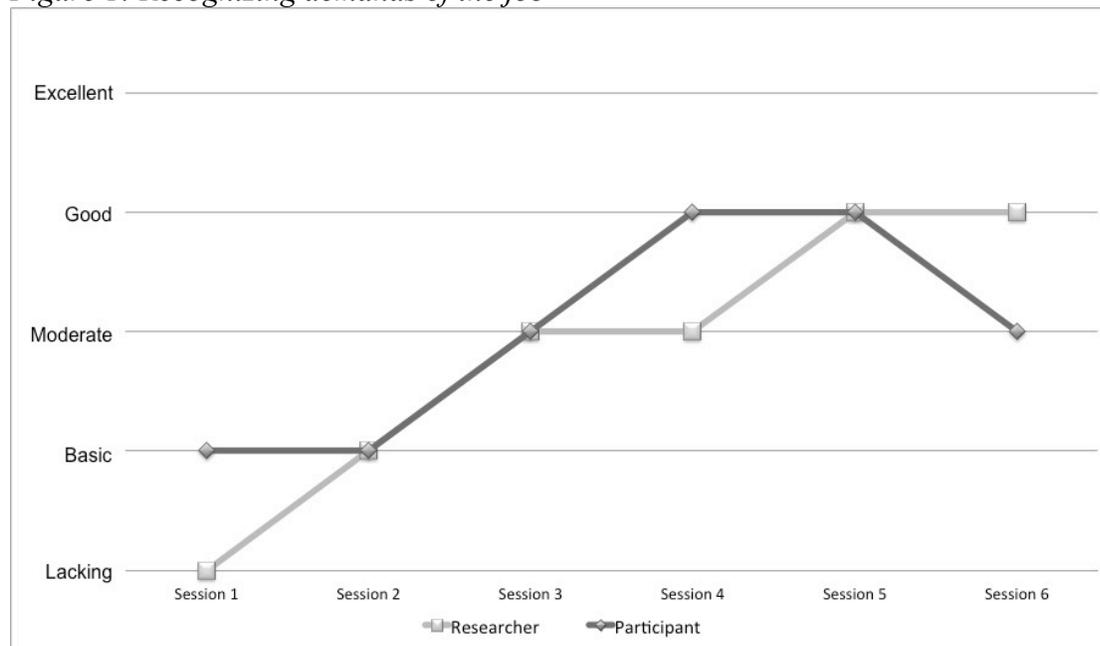
⁵ See <http://oyc.yale.edu/psychology/psyc-123#sessions>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data, observation notes, and rubric responses revealed that the participant did progress and develop her self-reflective practice skills over the six sessions. Figures 1-8 indicate the perspectives of both the participant and the researcher across the six sessions. It is worth noting that most of the figures show an upward trajectory of knowledge and articulation of self-reflective practices, from either or both participant and researcher. These results indicate that the participant developed her critical thinking skills over the three-month period.

A point of interest is that Figures 1-8 generally suggest that the participant started with a higher perception of demonstrating self-reflective practice than the researcher. However, for sessions 5 and 6, both Figure shows the participant rated her performance either the same as previous sessions or lower. This possibly indicates that the participant became more aware of her self-reflective practice and rated her performance through a more critical lens over time, as can be seen in Figures 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7.

Figure 1: Recognizing demands of the job



Figures 1 and 2 suggest overall improvements when recognizing the demands and controls of the job; however for session 6, the participant rated herself lower than the previous session, indicating she may have become more self-reflective and judged her performance more critically than previous sessions.

Figure 2: Recognizing controls of the job

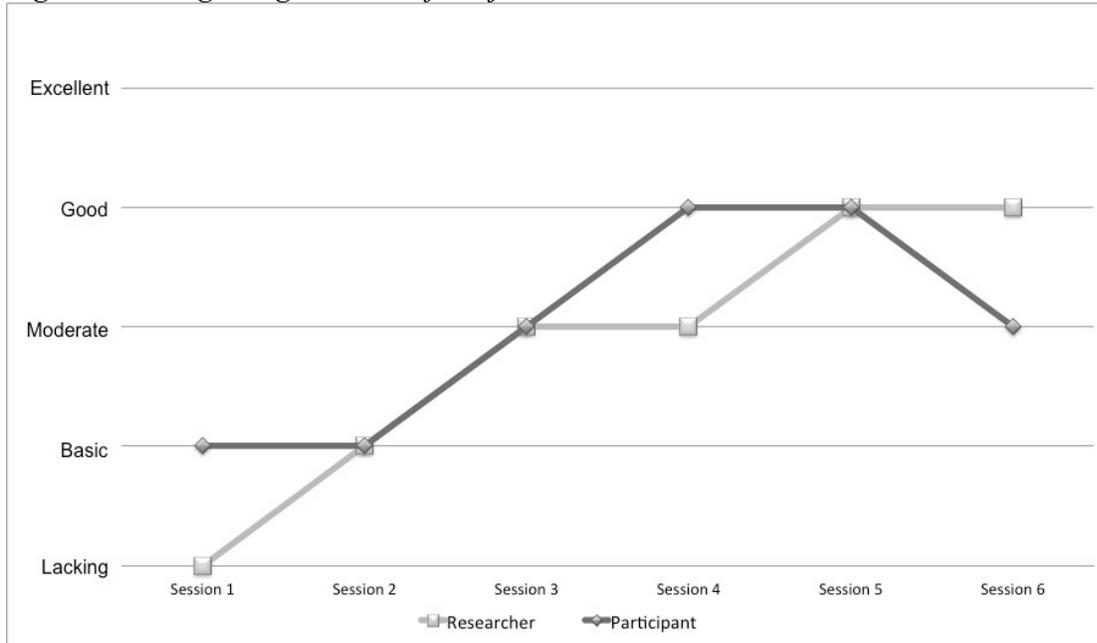


Figure 3: Recognizing and articulating strategies used for omissions

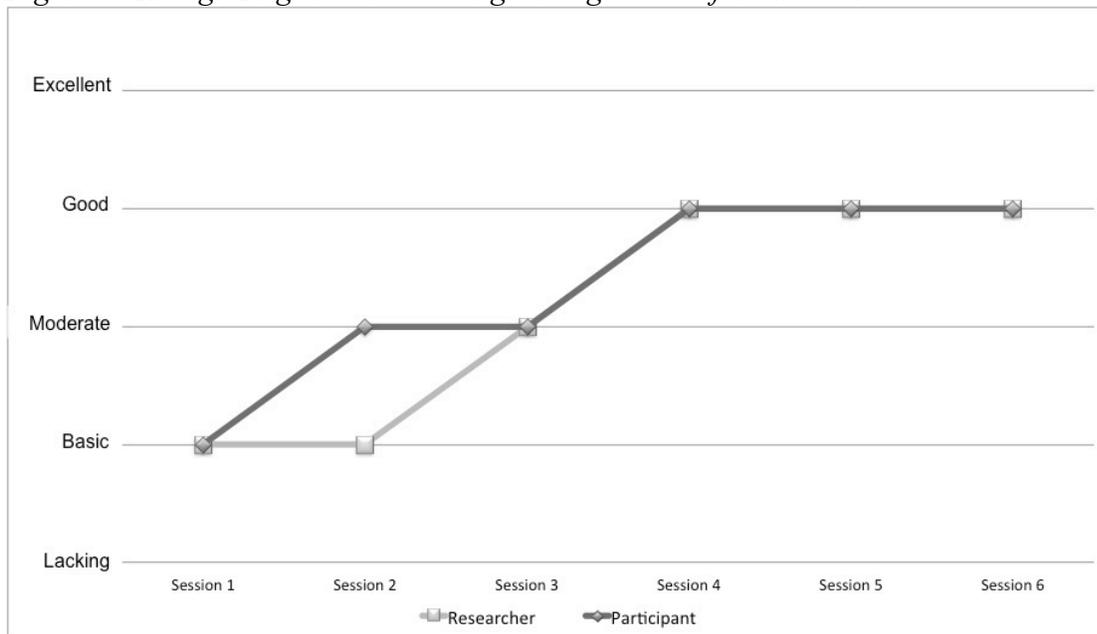


Figure 3 indicates both participant and researcher noticed improvements with the participant's strategies used when omitting information during her interpreting.

Figure 4 shows an unexpected decline of the participant’s perception of interpreting additions. The participant was unaware of any additions and therefore rated herself ‘lacking.’

Figure 4: Recognizing and articulating strategies used for additions

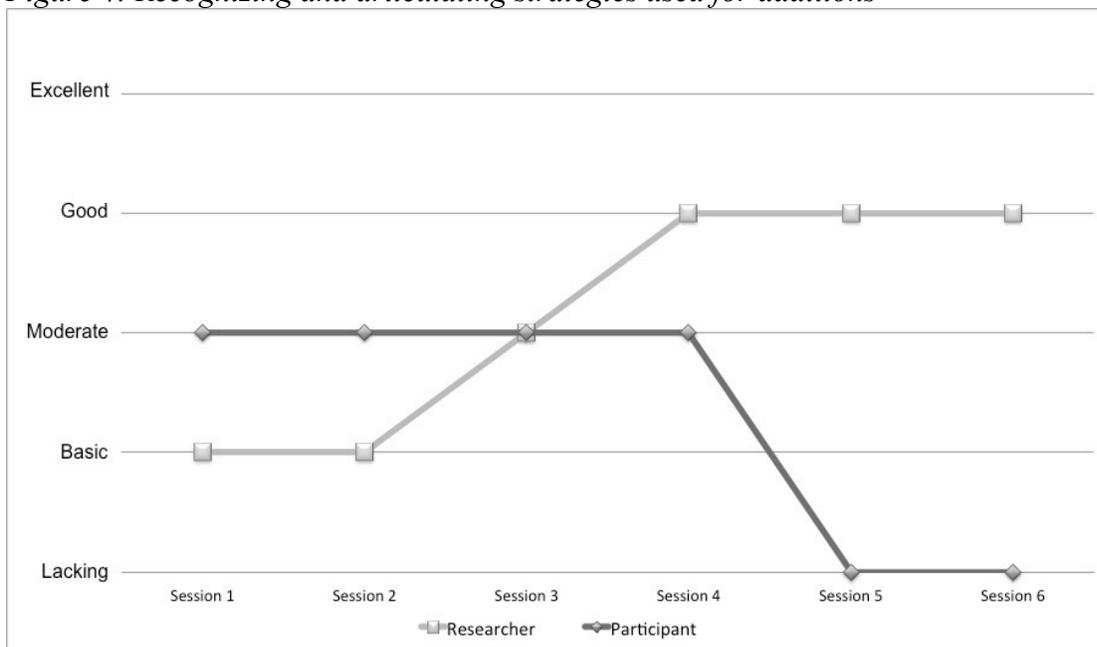


Figure 5: Recognizing and articulating use of problem solving strategies

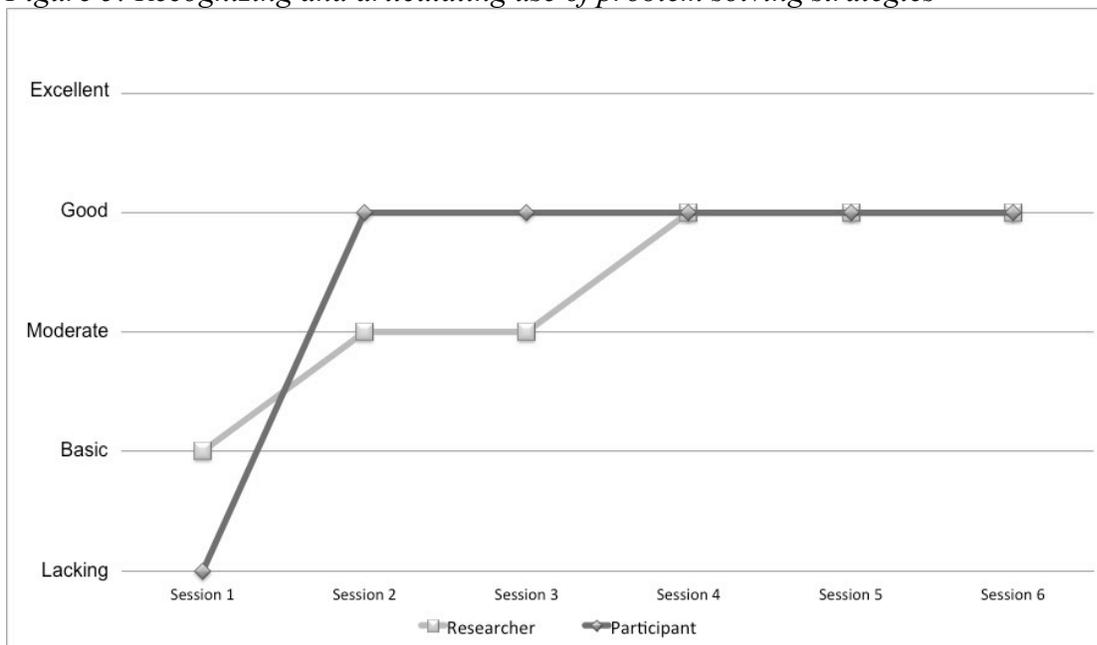


Figure 5 shows a great improvement from the participant’s perspective of her problem-solving strategies from session 1 to session 2, which could have been influenced by the researcher’s prompt questions during the reflective interview discussion.

Figure 6 indicates a decline in the participant’s rating during session 5, possibly suggesting the participant was rating herself more critically than previous sessions.

Figure 6: Identifying strengths in interpreting

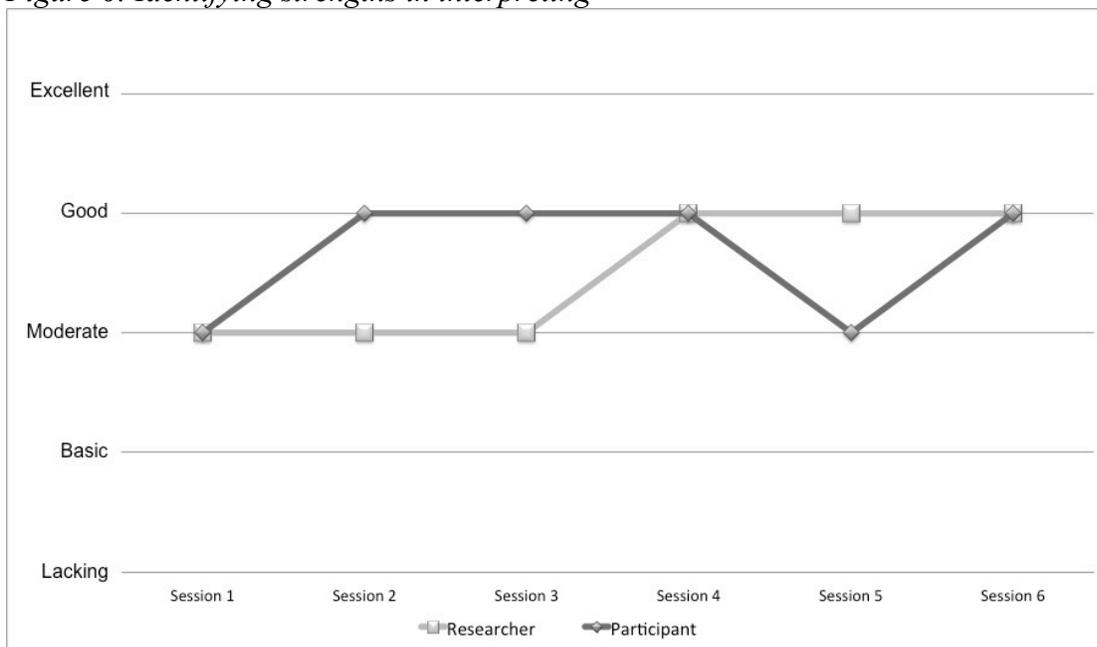


Figure 7: Identifying weaknesses in interpreting

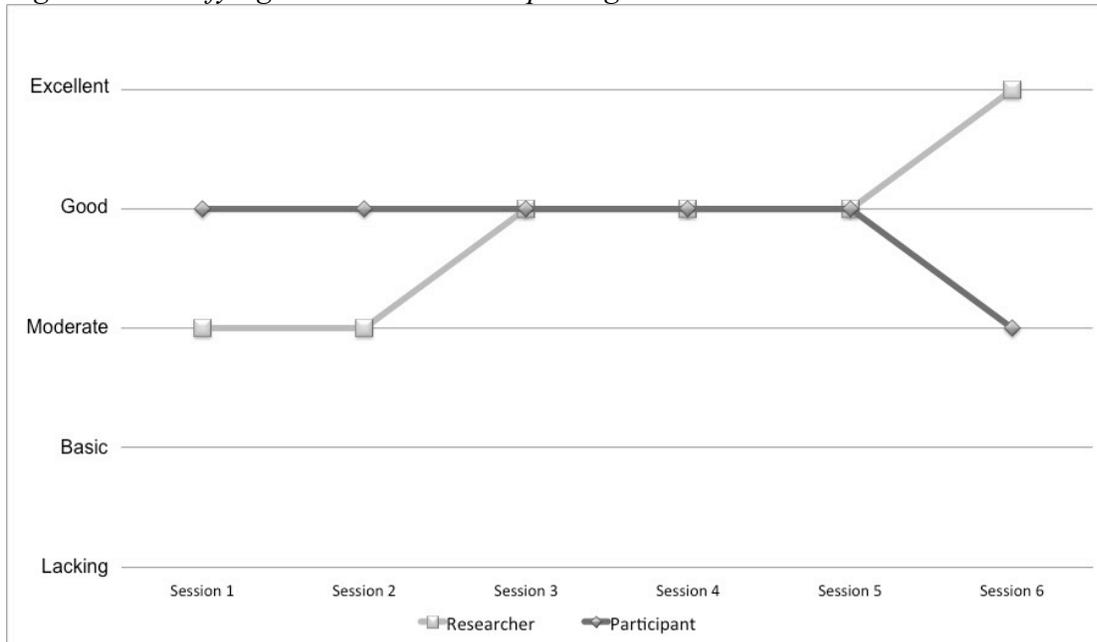
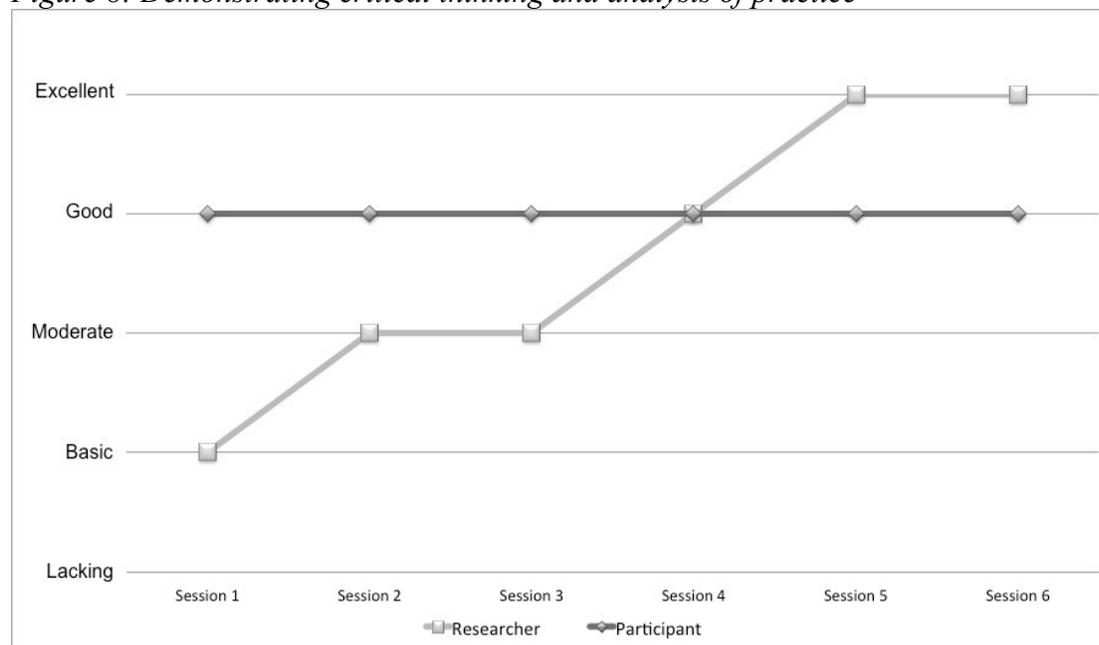


Figure 7 suggests that the participant was confident identifying her weaknesses while interpreting, however, session 6 indicates that the participant noticed a reduction in her ability to identify her weaknesses, suggesting that she was either producing more cohesive phrases, or again, she was more critical upon reflection.

Figure 8 shows the participant did not notice an increase in her overall critical thinking and analysis of her practice, conversely, the researcher noticed a steady incline of progress over the 6 sessions.

Figure 8: Demonstrating critical thinking and analysis of practice



PREPARATION

A key aspect of self-reflective practice for interpreters is to obtain preparation material before an interpreted assignment and take the time to become familiar with the content, location, overall aim, target audience, language direction, and method of working with a tandem interpreter (Napier, McKee & Goswell, 2010) before entering the interpreting assignment.

During session 1, the participant noted that she was keen to learn more about self-reflective practice, stating:

P: ... It's difficult to self-reflect when you're not sure HOW to self-reflect.

This statement indicates and supports the idea that novice interpreters would not likely be fully equipped with self-reflective practice skills.

Before each session, the researcher emailed the participant a brief summary of relevant information, outlining the interpreting segment and what topics the lecturer would cover. During the reflective interview of session 1, the participant was asked if she made any other efforts in preparation. Her response was:

P: No I didn't [prepare] and you know I thought, that's something that I really should do, but didn't get around to it...

This statement suggests that the participant was aware of the importance of preparation, however for reasons not identified, the participant did not engage in further preparation before the first session. In contrast, during session 2, the participant revealed that she actively prepared before the session, including a web search of the lecturer, noting that his presentation style was consistent with the previous lecture session. During subsequent sessions, the participant mentioned that she had prepared by watching the previous recorded interpreted segments for additional preparation and analysis of her own work.

In session 3, the participant stated that she had purchased one of the lecturer's published works as a reference. Another useful strategy to gather preparation before the interpreting assignment is to ask the lecturer if they have copies of the PowerPoint and notes to which they would be referring. After the researcher prompted the participant about preparation in session 5, the participant identified that she could use this strategy and request lecturers' notes.

In both sessions 5 and 6, the participant was able to recognize that she would benefit from requesting information prior to the commencement of the sessions. This was evident in session 5 as the participant was actively seeking out a variety of information that would assist her interpreting process and understanding:

P: I did have a look at some stuff on the Internet about... the physiology of food, so I found something that was really complex and then searched for some other stuff...

Having adequate access to preparation materials can alleviate some of the demands (Dean & Pollard, 2001, 2011) of the assignment, and thus can equip the interpreter with access to more controls while interpreting.

DEMANDS AND CONTROLS

Dean and Pollard (2001, 2011) categorize the demands of the interpreted job as linguistic, environmental, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The more demands of an interpreting job that can be identified, the more opportunity an interpreter has to formulate controls, or responses, to the presenting demands. The participant in this case study was able, after prompting and discussion through sessions 1-6, to start identifying possible demands and controls that she could engage in while interpreting.

During session 1, the participant was able to describe a variety of demands and controls but was unable to explain what she had observed using specific terminology. For example, the interpreter was essentially describing intrapersonal demands:

P: I felt that it was really not the way it was because of what was going on inside my mind, I guess, thinking that I missed that, and then the thought processes in my mind...

It should be noted that after each session the participant filled out the rubric, and this may have influenced and facilitated a faster progression of understanding and awareness of DC-S, rather

than allowing a natural progression without intervention from the rubric and prompting questions from the researcher.

Throughout the sessions, the participant was highly aware of her intrapersonal ‘talk,’ which would distract her from listening to and receiving the source message; thus hindering the interpreting process, missed information, which resulted in a lack of cohesion of meaning. One identified control strategy to overcome the internal talk was discussed during session 4 where the participant utilized her prior knowledge of the topic to assist in her interpreting. While this could be a valid strategy, it may compromise the interpreted output, rendering the target message as a deceptive interpretation⁶ appearing effective yet the intended meaning could be skewed (Cerney, 2000).

Session 3, as pointed out by the researcher, was particularly noisy in other areas of the office space, resulting with the participant being concerned, especially as she had her back to the door, that someone from outside the interview room would interrupt the session. The participant, however, did not mention this information until session 4, as on that particular day, the office space was extremely quiet, a stark difference from the previous session. The environmental noisy distractors could have contributed to the participant missing some information.

The participant also suggested in session 5 that the lecturer was particularly fast-paced compared to previous sessions. This resulted in the participant missing chunks of information, and the participant noticing herself becoming frustrated. This emotion may have contributed to the lack of comprehension of the source message at times and a reduction of utilizing effective controls to overcome the intrapersonal demand. When asked if there was anything the participant could have done to increase her controls in that situation, she responded by reminding herself that the information was going to be covered in future lectures and therefore:

P: ... I just couldn't keep up and so I thought whatever I can do to minimize, if they can do that later, then I'll just try and keep up as much as I can... so it kind of made me feel a little bit less pressured.

The researcher also noticed that the participant had started the interpreted segment in session 5 with a more ‘free’ style of interpreting⁷, and when the pace of the lecture became faster, the participant would interpret more ‘literally’ by following English word order and reduction of spatial referencing (as noted by Napier, 2002, in university lectures). In order to cope with the fast pace of the lecture, the participant did however show ability to engage in a variety of coping strategies (Napier, 2004), such as reduction and summarizing strategies while interpreting. Linguistic demands of session 5 presented as having more jargon and also a lack of sequence in the delivered topics. The participant had also noted, and as an interpersonal demand, the lecturer seeming more stressed than in previous sessions, resulting in the lecturer’s mood affecting the

⁶ Deceptive interpretation: TL production pretends to be accurate, confident, and equivalent in all perceivable ways other than the information and/or intent

(<http://handandmind.org/TenCsArticle.pdf> p. 9)

⁷ Literal approaches of the interpreting process rely more on borrowing lexicon from the source text, whereas free interpreting is an equivalence based approach (Napier, 1998)

participant's own stress levels, thus more interpreting errors occurred.

OMISSIONS AND ADDITIONS

The participant identified fingerspelling as a catalyst for omissions of subsequent concepts, due to feeling the need to spell a word and repeat the spelled word to ensure correct production. Therefore, the participant sometimes missed the next chunk of source text because she had disengaged with the interpreting process by focussing on her fingerspelling production. This was most noticeable during session 1. In later sessions, the researcher noticed that the participant became less focussed on fingerspelling and was able to continue interpreting without distraction of correct spelling, possibly because she was more conscious of her use of fingerspelling.

Cokely (1992) describes a variety of interpretation errors as miscues, and that the accuracy of an interpretation is directly dependent on the interpreter comprehending the source text; therefore, lag time is essential in order to gain understanding of the source text before producing the target text. The participant noticed that at times she would not wait for the whole concept before commencing to interpret or waiting too long and then losing the concept. Initially, while the participant was able to describe and understand the use of lag time, there was no evidence of applying the appropriate terminology. Figures 3 and 4 show that the researcher gave a rating of 'basic' for the first two sessions, then in session 3, the researcher was satisfied that the participant was now demonstrating further knowledge of omissions and additions by her use of appropriate terminology and rated this accordingly.

The most common additions produced by the participant were when she did not quite comprehend the concept and utilized her prior knowledge of the topic to cover the missed information. At times, the participant noticed that this would lead to the interpreting output on a different information path than was intended by the lecturer, resulting in lexical and cohesive additional information to be repaired.

In session 2, the lecturer was listing a variety of animal species and the participant fingerspelled M-O-O-S-E. 'Moose' was not one of the mentioned species, therefore the participant created a substitution miscue without affecting the overall meaning of the message. The participant explained the occurrence of this substitution as being due to misspelling the word 'M-A-M-M-O-T-H' and trying to keep up with the speaker, she made the decision to spell 'M-O-O-S-E.' The participant also described a few instances of using the wrong sign, resulting in changing the meaning of the message, such as HEART-ATTACK instead of BRAVE; DIARRHOEA instead of ADVERTISING; and interchanging DIFFERENCE with CHANGE.

Other additions the participant made included summarizing the PowerPoint presentation when the lecturer had not referred to the PowerPoint. The participant also noticed that she often repaired concepts that had already been produced; however this would then have impact on subsequent concepts, as her lag time became too long to retain the information, which resulted in omissions. The participant rated sessions 5 and 6 (Figure 4) as 'N/A' possibly due to the significant reduction in additions and omissions as she became more familiar with the topic and useful strategies she adopted while interpreting, thus becoming more confident and able to attend to the meaning and reduce her attention to the form of the message (Cokely, 1992).

Analysis of sessions 1-6 indicates that the participant was able to identify when and where omissions occurred, however, she did not indicate knowledge of the various types of omissions as described in the omission taxonomy (Napier, 2004). The researcher identified a few of the omission types and discussed concepts with the participant, such as conscious unintentional and conscious receptive omissions. The participant was then able to identify the occurrences of these types of omissions, yet did not use the terminology to describe these instances, even after the concepts had been explained. It was expected that the participant would use the terminology during subsequent sessions, but there was no evidence of this.

Although the participant did not articulate specific terminology, she was certainly aware of when and, quite often, why miscues were occurring. Cokely (1992) also suggests that miscues can be minimized when an interpreter is aware of when and why these instances happen during the interpreting process; thus becoming able to reduce or even cease producing these miscues by creating a variety of coping and problem-solving strategies.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

One of the consistent problem-solving strategies the participant employed was to refer to the visual PowerPoint, especially when she did not quite comprehend the source text. The participant was consistently able to direct the attention to the PowerPoint and summarize the content before moving on to the next concept, an effective strategy noted by Frasu (2007). Another strategy was to summarize the source message, having the ability to decipher what is of most importance. The participant also suggested in session 1 that repeating a concept for clarity was also used as a problem-solving strategy.

While not an optimal interpreting performance, the participant used the strategy of interpreting more literally when the source message became very dense and delivered at a faster pace. Discussing interpreting styles, and possible problem-solving strategies to alleviate the pressure, the participant identified her choices as:

P: I just couldn't keep up and so I thought whatever I can do to minimize, they can do that later, then I'll just try and keep up as much as I can.

R: ... if someone is talking really fast, do you think you would be able to say to your [deaf] student 'just letting you know they're [lecturer talking] really fast' or sort of giving a bit of extra information to let them know that yes, you are listening, you are waiting for something that's clear?

P: Yeah definitely 'cause the feeling of pressure is that they know I'm not doing anything, so if I could just kinda go, just hold on for a second then I could really close my mind to that feeling of anxiety, I guess, and then be able to...

R: or just finding something that allows you that time, instead of that feeling of GASP, they're waiting for something and I can't do anything with it yet... the important this is how to alleviate YOUR stress... because it's more demanding on you when you are feeling all this intrapersonal stuff going on...

As previously mentioned, the participant found fingerspelling to be problematic. One solution to the fingerspelling issue was to abbreviate the fingerspelled word/concept and create an initialised nonce sign. For example: 'N-U-T-R-I-T-I-O-N' became 'N-N' and 'C-A-L-O-R-I-E-S' was reduced to 'C-A-L'. This seemed to alleviate the pressure of correct fingerspelling for the participant, therefore reducing the occurrence of missing the next concept.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The participant was able to demonstrate her knowledge and understanding of her own strengths and weaknesses (see Figures 6 & 7). The participant noticed that her use of spatial referencing was consistently clear throughout the sessions, that this as one of her strengths in session 3. The researcher agreed with this during discussions in sessions 4 and 6.

While the participant was able to articulate her strengths, Figures 6 and 7 do not indicate a significant progression. In sessions 5 and 6, the participant recognized that she was using a more 'free' interpreting style, which alleviated many of the weaknesses that were observed in previous sessions. The participant noted that this was due to familiarity with the topic and taking the time to prepare before most sessions.

During sessions 1, 2, and 3, the participant focussed more on the weaknesses of her interpreted segments. She gave a rating of 'good' in sessions 1-5, however there was a perceived decline in session 6. This suggests that the participant was more aware of her weaknesses, however, in session 6, she was able to utilize more strategies to reduce omissions and filler signs such as 'MAKE-SURE' and 'S-O,' which was most noticed in session 4. The participant identified the use of these filler signs as a habit, in order to gain some time to listen to the source message and before interpreting the target message, as a coping strategy.

The researcher suggested that if the participant found the need to utilize these filler signs, then maybe she could have a list of these signs to use, instead of repeatedly using the same signs, which may alleviate the distraction of using these filler signs too often.

Another weakness the participant identified was the omission of large segments of source message from the interpretation. This was due to high levels of technical jargon and not always utilizing appropriate lag time. When the interpreter used her prior knowledge in these cases, as previously mentioned, her interpreting would at times be unfaithful to the source message, necessitating repairs, which added stress for the participant and consequently resulted in more omissions being made.

Figures 6 and 7 indicate that the participant has knowledge of her strengths and weaknesses; however, the figures also suggest that further identification and discussion of various strategies would be beneficial to the participant. The aims of this paper suggest that the participant would benefit from ongoing mentoring, a conclusion that supports the posed questions of this case study.

INTERPRETING SUCCESS

This case study also examined the participant's perceptions of whether she believed the overall interpreting segments were successful or not. Below, Table 1 displays the participant's responses to the question:

Overall, do you think this was a successful interpretation?

Table 1: Overall successful/unsuccessful interpretation.

| Session | Overall | Other comments |
|---------|---------|--|
| 1 | No | A lot of information was missed, pockets of random information |
| 2 | Yes | There were a few doozies, but overall, OK. |
| 3 | Yes | - |
| 4 | No | Parts of the overall message were successful |
| 5 | No | The introduction was great, but overall too much missed information. |
| 6 | Yes | I just thought it was going to be difficult, similar to last week, but it was not. |

The participant's answers in Table 1 indicate that she was definitely becoming more aware of her interpreting skill and self-reflective practice as well as becoming more analytical. For example in session 1, without any preparation, the participant may have found the segment difficult without having accessed background information or thinking about the possible demands and controls of the job. Once the participant engaged in preparation for subsequent sessions, it was expected that she would more likely rate her interpreting as successful, as can be seen in her comments for sessions 2 and 3. Even though the participant rated sessions 4 and 5 as unsuccessful, she acknowledged that there were successful parts during those interpreted segments.

An interesting point to note was that the participant mentioned in session 6 that she had been prepared for the segment to be similar to session 5, therefore expecting to feel more stressed as session 5 was significantly faster and more heavy with jargon than any other session. The participant also mentioned that she has had previous experience working as a university interpreter and no longer worked in that setting because of unsatisfactory work experiences and not yet feeling equipped with effective coping strategies at the time. Since the participant has been involved in this case study, she has gained confidence in her interpreting at the university level and has identified possible coping strategies to assist in future when she does accept university assignments again.

The fact that the participant had previous work experience as a university interpreter, and had been unable to engage in effective coping strategies previously, suggests that she would have greatly benefited from formal training that focussed on self-reflective practice and critical analysis strategies.

DEMONSTRATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

The rubric was designed incorporating various aspects of self-reflective practice with a five-point scale of critique ranging from 1 (lacking knowledge of self-reflective practice) to 5 (excellent demonstration of self-reflection). As suggested throughout the discussion section of this paper, the participant clearly demonstrated a progression with her practice over the six sessions.

Despite the overall progression, the participant rated her level of critical thinking as consistently 'good' from sessions 1-6 (Figure 8). There was no indication from her perspective of any progressive change throughout the sessions. However, Figures 1-7 indicate significant noticed improvements during discussion with the researcher, and the participant being able to identify and discuss a variety of strategies that incorporate critical thinking.

The researcher did notice a dramatic improvement in the participant's demonstrated critical thinking and analysis of her practice. In session 1, the participant stated:

P: I don't know how to get ready though. I'm hoping that it's just experience, you know. Yeah I just think it's experience. I think it's feedback and things like this.

By contrast, the participant said in session 6:

P: I'm seeing the benefits of research before, before attending, or before doing an assignment rather than just coming in cold... definitely.

As previously noted, the participant did not use self-reflective terminology in her discussions, but she was able to describe a variety of self-reflective practices after prompting from the researcher. Again, this indicates that the participant would benefit from ongoing support and instruction in taxonomies, such as DC-S, miscue analysis, and the omission taxonomy. Having ongoing mentoring and regular practice using these systems would greatly improve her ability to critically analyze her interpreting and enhance the self-reflective practice that she demonstrated throughout this case study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Before drawing any conclusions from this case study, it is worth acknowledging the potential limitations of the study. Given the fact that this case study focused on one participant living in Victoria, Australia, findings from this study are not necessarily applicable to the general population of novice interpreters. Therefore, these findings should only be considered as a reference point for further investigation and consideration.

This case study could be replicated to simulate a realistic lecture environment with both lecturer and deaf student in attendance. Unfortunately, a realistic lecture environment could not be included within the scope and timeframe of this case study. This could have been an influencing factor in the participant's target message production, as she had no deaf 'audience' to sign to.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This case study has demonstrated that over a period of guided self-analysis activity, a novice interpreter could be seen to develop a higher level of critical self-reflective skills. The participant was able to self-reflect at a rudimentary level, and over the course of the six sessions, there was indication that she greatly improved her ability to critically analyze her interpreting skills.

Self-reflective skills in a practice profession such as Auslan interpreting are fundamental to ensuring that novice interpreters can progress toward and achieve expertise. By providing opportunities through internship, mentoring, or coaching programs, self-reflective practice can be embedded within continuing professional development as well as formal interpreter training curricula. With the provision of such programs, student interpreters may be better equipped to service the hearing and Deaf communities more effectively. While there are some graduate and mentoring programs offered in Victoria, Australia, further investigation is needed to identify how to enhance current programs and embed self-reflective practice into the current curriculum and the possibility of internships for future interpreting students.

Further investigation is required into the success of internships and deliberate practice in other disciplines, such as medical and educational professions, thus informing future considerations of internships for student interpreters.

Suggestions for further study include:

- Replication of this case study over a longer period of time with more participants.
- Replication of this case study nationally would provide further insights into potential gaps in novice interpreters' knowledge and application of self-reflective practices.
- A cross-linguistic comparison with other spoken and signed language interpreters would further inform current and future practices.
- Further triangulation of this case study would be to analyze the actual accuracy of interpreted output.
- As this case study did not investigate the participant's background as a native/non-native Auslan user, a future investigation could focus on differences in the use of self-reflective practices between native and non-native Auslan users.

The findings from this case study demonstrate the need for interpreters to be motivated to achieve expertise in the field by actively seeking opportunities to develop self-reflective practices and continually assess their work through collaborative and focused discussion with other interpreting professionals. Interpreting expertise equates to more effective interpreting services and access between the Deaf and hearing communities, while developing and retaining a greater supply of highly skilled sign language interpreters in Australia.

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APPENDIX 1:

Self-Reflective Rubric

| | 1: lacking evidence of self-reflection | 2: basic/superficial demonstration of self-reflection | 3: moderate demonstration of self-reflection | 4: good demonstration of self-reflection | 5: excellent demonstration of self-reflection |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| Recognising Demands of the job (Dean & Pollard) | | | | | |
| Recognising Controls of the job (Dean & Pollard) | | | | | |
| Recognising and articulating strategies used for omissions (Napier) | | | | | |
| Recognising and articulating strategies used for additions (Cokely) | | | | | |
| Recognising and articulating problem-solving while interpreting (Molenaar, van Boxtel & Slegers) | | | | | |
| Identified strengths in interpreting | | | | | |
| Identified weaknesses in interpreting | | | | | |
| Demonstrates critical thinking and analysis of own practice | | | | | |