2012

Participation Framework and Footing Shifts in an Interpreted Academic Meeting

Annie R. Marks
Gallaudet University, annie.marks@gallaudet.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi
Part of the Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics Commons, Discourse and Text Linguistics Commons, International and Intercultural Communication Commons, Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons, and the Other Communication Commons

Suggested Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/joi/vol22/iss1/4

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Interpretation by an authorized editor of the JOI, on behalf of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). For more information, please contact len.roberson@unf.edu.
© All Rights Reserved
Introduction

When people engage in conversation, the frames and schema they bring to the interaction influence their perception of success for that interaction. When we enter specific settings and engage in familiar tasks, we often have frameworks based on our past experiences that guide us in the interaction and influence our expectations for what will happen. When a patient visits the doctor, the patient expects that the doctor will ask a series of questions during an exam in order to determine their ailment. When a student meets with a professor about a homework assignment, the professor knows that the student has come to seek information. In all of our interactions, we construct and maintain relationships based on how we are connected with the people with whom we interact. These structures influence how we interact and talk. When an interpreter facilitates communication between people who use different languages, the interpreter also brings personal frames and schema to the interaction, and how these align with the participants can influence the interaction. We can examine the participant structures that exist within interpreted interaction as they relate to Goffman’s (1981) notion of footing.

This study investigates an interpreter’s footings and features of interaction management in an interpreted academic meeting. The objective is to add to the limited amount of research that examines footings in interpreted interaction. Metzger (1995, 1999) performed one of the only studies of participation framework and footings in ASL-English interpreted encounters. This study is a replication of Metzger’s initial work and aims to apply her research framework to a different set of data and examine how her findings about footings apply to a different setting and different participants. Replication of a study is significant because it adds to a general body of literature in the field and provides a basis of comparison and contrast with previous related studies. In addition, when findings support those in previous studies, theories may be
strengthened, new ways of analyzing the topic may emerge, and new questions may be raised that lead to further study.

Students training to become sign language interpreters are often faced with the challenge of negotiating boundaries with the deaf and hearing consumers with whom they interact. Many interpreter training programs traditionally taught students that it is most appropriate to maintain “neutrality” in our interactions and in our interpretations (Metzger, 1999). The findings of this case study reinforce the findings of Metzger’s previous case study and lend support to the notion that sign language interpreters are not merely passive conduits of language, but active participants in the discourse and interactions they interpret (Metzger, 1999; Roy, 2000). Furthermore, it is essential that interpreters are cognizant of how their role and presence influences the structure and flow of interaction (Angelleli, 2001, 2003; Metzger, 1995, 1999; Roy, 1989, 2000; Wadensjö, 1992, 1998).

**Literature Review**

**Framing and Footing in Direct Discourse**

*Framing* in discourse allows us to show how we mean what we say or do. Bateson (1972) introduced the term “frames” as a part of discourse, noting that in order for a listener and speaker to both comprehend an utterance, both must be conscious of the frame in which it was intended. When speakers and listeners engage in conversation and do not share a relevant framework, misunderstandings and misinterpretations are more likely to occur. Following Bateson, others analyzed how framing occurs in discourse from perspectives rooted in linguistic anthropology (Gumperz, 1982) and sociology (Goffman, 1981).

The background knowledge and frames we bring to a conversation influence our interpretations of how successful the conversation is. Gumperz (1982) discusses interpretative
frames and how failure to respond in a way or say something that is normally expected may result from socio-cultural background differences between participants. Frames can also include a participant’s expectations about the structure of a conversation, including openings and closings, and how the other person should respond to specific utterances within a conversation (Gumperz, 1982; Tannen, 1993).

Goffman (1981) illustrates how people use multiple frameworks to make sense of events as they are being constructed. Conversational participants bring their own frames and schemas to a conversational event and contribute to what Goffman refers to as a participation framework. People adapt the ways they participate in conversation, including speaking, listening, and interacting, based on understanding of their own involvement and of others’ involvement in an encounter.

Within the participation framework is the foundation for Goffman’s notion of footing (1981). Footing is “the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (p. 128). Essentially, when we talk with others, we make language choices based on our relationship with them. Within a conversation, participants may shift footings as they change their alignments with each other from moment to moment, based on contextual and linguistic cues signaled in utterances. Goffman illustrates a shift in footing in an example that occurred in an exchange between President Nixon and a female reporter who was one of several witnesses present in a professional capacity for the signing of a bill at the White House. After the ceremony in the Oval Office, the President teased the reporter about wearing slacks. His joking resulted in a footing shift with the reporter. Goffman considers this shift in footing noteworthy because it demonstrates the power of a president to force a female out of her role as a professional in the context and into a
sexualized, domestic one that implies a social definition that women need to be ready to receive comments about their appearance and furthermore that they should approve of this kind of shift in attention, even when it begins in a professional capacity.

In his explanation of footing, Goffman (1981) also proposes that the traditional speaker-hearer dyad is too simple to describe actual interactive discourse. In order to fully describe how shifts in footing occur, he expands the speaker-hearer dyad to include different kinds of participants. Hearers of conversation may be ratified, meaning they have an official place in the encounter, or unratified, meaning someone who may have access to the encounter, but not an official place. In addition, he defines three different roles for speakers: principal, author, and animator. The principal is the person who is responsible for the message, the author originates the content and form of an utterance, and the animator is the person who actually produces an utterance. Speakers may fulfill all three roles, but they do not necessarily have to, and may not do so simultaneously (Goffman, 1981).

Gumperz (1982) notes that in conversation there seems to be an introductory phase where interpersonal relationships are negotiated and participants seek information about common experiences or shared perspectives. If successful, the speakers in the interaction will likely cooperate and produce a well-coordinated sequence of exchanges. Gumperz’s observation and Goffman’s (1981) notion of footing share a critical link—if conversation participants share alignment, then the conversation is more likely to be viewed as successful by both people.

**Footing in Interpreted Interaction**

Wadensjö (1998) discusses footing shifts in spoken language interpreted interaction and analyzed two types of interpreted talk: relaying talk and coordinating talk. Her study found that interpreters’ renditions serve different functions and purposes based on the kind of talk being
relayed. The interpreter is more than just simply a passive conduit of language. Rather, the interpreter has a significant role in coordinating the interpreted interaction (Roy, 1989, 2000; Wadensjö, 1998).

In regards to an interpreter’s coordinating function, Wadensjö (1998) also discusses implicit and explicit types of coordination. She notes that in explicit coordination, some ‘interpreter utterances’ are designed to do coordinating work. In what she refers to as text-oriented translation approach (seeing talk as text), the interpreter may make requests for clarification, requests for time to translate, or comments on translations based on the utterances they are interpreting. Alternatively, interpreters also engage in an interaction oriented approach, with the perspective of talk as activity. According to Wadensjö, interaction oriented initiatives include, (1) requests to observe turn-taking order, (2) invitations to start, stop, or continue talking, and (3) requests for solicited but not yet provided information.

An interpreter’s talk contains evidence of potential footings within the interpreted interaction. Wadensjö (1998) analyzes two types of utterances generated by interpreters: renditions and non-renditions. She describes renditions as utterances that are originated by a principal speaker who is not the interpreter; however, the interpreter is responsible for the content and form of the utterance. In contrast, a non-rendition is an interpreter-generated utterance that is originated by the interpreter.

**Footing in ASL-English Interpreted Interaction**

Metzger (1999) examines evidence of footing in ASL-English interpreted interaction. Her study analyzes two video-recorded ASL-English interpreted encounters with the goal of identifying and categorizing evidence of footing and focused primarily on interpreter-generated utterances (non-renditions). The first situation is a mock medical encounter that consists of a pre-
recorded role-play of a medical interview as interpreted by an interpreting student. The second case involves a professional interpreter interpreting an authentic medical interview in a pediatric setting.

Following Wadensjö’s (1998) categories of relaying talk and coordinating talk, Metzger (1999) analyzes footing in the mock and authentic medical encounters and organizes the evidence into two categories: Relayings and Interaction Management. In her discussion of relayings, Metzger notes that when an interpreter relays what another person says, the original speaker is the primary author, while the interpreter is the secondary author and animator. Therefore, utterances where the interpreter is the primary author are unique in regards to footing. She examines four types of relayings present in the interpreted encounters where the interpreter is the primary author of an utterance. These sub-categories include source attribution, explanations, repetitions, and requests for clarification.

Metzger (1999) also defines types of interactional management, including introductions, responses to questions, interference, and summonses. Further explication of each sub-category of relayings and interaction management is provided in the analysis section of this paper. The non-renditions and footings represented in Metzger’s data are important indicators that the interpreter has an influence on the interpreted interactive discourse. Metzger considers this significant for two reasons. First, she notes that the function of several of the footings is related to the goal of providing access to parts of the interaction that would otherwise be unknown or inaccessible to one or more participants in the interaction. In addition, the existence of different footings and shifts in those footings supports Roy’s (1989) “contention that interpreters are not merely conduits providing access to linguistic communication between interactional partners” (Metzger, 1999, p. 145).
Methodology

Data Requirements, Limitations, and Selection

This research study was conducted for a graduate level research methods course and one of the requirements for the assignment was that the data analyzed was derived from a video recorded interpreted situation that was previously published as a part of other research or material published for the general public. Since I wanted to analyze footing in interpreted interaction, video of a live and authentic interactive interpreted situation was an essential element of my research. However, published and openly accessible video recordings of interactive interpreted situations are still very sparse. Metzger (1999) discusses issues and limitations that arise with trying to collect videotaped interpreting data, including technological limitations, the intrusive nature of video technology, confidentiality for participants, presence of the researcher altering the flow of interaction (Labov, 1972, the Observer’s Paradox), and influence of the technician and setting on participants’ language choices. All of these factors contribute to the limited published video resources available for studying naturally occurring interpreting interaction. There is little research on ASL-English interpreting with data corpuses that include live, authentic interpreted interaction. There are only two case studies of ASL-English interpreted face-to-face interaction that are derived from actual situations: Roy’s (1989, 2000) sociolinguistic analysis of turn-taking in an interpreted academic meeting and Metzger’s (1995, 1999) study of a doctor-patient visit and a student role play.

The limited availability of published videos of authentic interactive interpreting narrowed data selection process for the present study. Roy’s (2000) original video data of an academic meeting satisfied the requirements of being an interactive, face-to-face interpreted conversation. I saw a unique opportunity to analyze Roy’s (2000) data using Metzger’s (1999) research...
framework about participation framework and footing categories in ASL-English interpreted interaction. Use of previously collected data was authorized for the purpose of this study, according to copyright regulations.

Data

The brief description of the data that follows is derived from Roy’s (2000) more extensive explanation of the conversation participants and purpose of the interaction. The participants in the interaction – the professor, the student, and the interpreter – came together for a pre-arranged meeting, thirty minutes before class, early in the fall semester. They met in the professor’s office, which was filled with bookshelves, filing cabinets, a desk and two chairs. The professor sat behind her desk, the student sat on one side of the desk, and the interpreter sat on an upended trashcan between them (on the professor’s left side). The researcher stood against the door and filmed the interaction.

The student was taking a graduate course about discourse analysis, which focused on narratives that occur in conversation. Students in the class were working on recording and transcribing narratives. The student recorded a narrative in ASL and requested the meeting with the professor to have her approve his transcription and discuss whether it was acceptable in its present form. The entire duration of the meeting was 11 minutes and 45 seconds. The student had taken a class with the professor previously, and both stated they were familiar and comfortable communicating using sign language interpreters in this kind of situation.

The professor is a faculty member in the linguistics department at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and holds the distinguished position of University Professor. The student was a Deaf man in his late 30s and an instructor at Gallaudet University. He was actively engaged in linguistic research about ASL and taught ASL and its structure to undergraduate
students. The interpreter was a young male in his late 20s, the son of Deaf parents, and a graduate of the Interpreter Training Program at Gallaudet University. He was also certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

**Coding and Transcription**

I coded and transcribed the data using the ELAN linguistic annotation program (free software downloadable online). In ELAN, I established a tier for each sub-category of Metzger’s (1999) categories of Relayings and Interaction Management. Tiers made the coding and transcription process more organized and visual (see Figure 1). Establishing separate tiers for each feature allowed me to separate and group my analysis of each type of footing. As I watched and analyzed the movie repeatedly, I made annotations in the corresponding tier each time I found an example of a specific type of footing.

![Figure 1: Screen shot of ELAN transcription with tiers](image)

**Analysis**

My analysis of the academic meeting is based on Metzger’s (1999) research about footing and participation frameworks in interpreted interaction. I analyze examples of footing...
and the alignment of the interpreter as they relate to Metzger’s categories of relayings and interaction management and corresponding types and features. Metzger’s study of mock and authentic interpreted medical encounters included a total of eight sub-categories; however, each case study in her research did not produce examples in all eight areas. Given that analysis in the present study is based on only one case study that is relatively short in length, not all of Metzger’s sub-categories are represented. I discuss examples of footing that correspond to five of Metzger’s sub-categories: source attribution, repetitions, responses to questions, interference, and summonses. In addition, I discuss evidence of footing shifts that relate to turn-taking management and propose a new category for these findings under interaction management. I also discuss a significant example of indirectness in the conversation previously discussed by Roy (2000) and how the interpreter’s alignment with the student during that specific part of the interaction also relates to several of Metzger’s sub-categories of footing in interpreted interaction.

Relayings

Metzger (1999) defines relayings as types of utterances or parts of the interpretation where the interpreter is the primary author and animator. Two of Metzger’s sub-categories of relayings are present in the professor-graduate student meeting interpretation: source attribution and repetitions.

Source Attribution

Interpreters are tasked with being a single source through which all discourse in an interaction is relayed for interlocutors who use different languages. Interlocutors who are monolingual native English speakers and listeners have access to information about the source of utterances produced in English through voice recognition and location. Therefore, in ASL-
English interpreted interaction, it is sometimes necessary for the interpreter to indicate the source of an utterance (the person who is speaking or signing) in the interpretation, especially if there are more than two people involved in the interaction. In addition, the alignment of the interpreter and the interpreter’s own interaction with the interlocutors and non-renditions (interpreter generated utterances) may result in need for clarification about who is talking (Metzger, 1999).

Metzger analyzes source attributions as a part of her relayings category for the mock and real-life medical encounters, and she finds that the interpreters’ attribution of source frequently manifests through indexical pointing. Indexical pointing takes the form of the interpreter using an extended index finger to point in the direction of the person talking. In the professor-graduate student meeting, the interpreter included a total of ten source attributions in his interpretation mainly by using indexical pointing (see Figure 2) and also through the use of the sign “SAY,” sometimes combined with an indexical point.

In the beginning of the meeting there are ordinary interruptions to the conversation. Soon after the meeting begins, the phone rings and the interpreter and the professor both acknowledge it and inform the student. The professor turns her attention to the person on the phone and the student and the interpreter engage in a brief conversation exchange when the student asks the interpreter a question. When the student obtains his answer from the interpreter, the interpreter goes back to interpreting for the professor. He points at the professor and then begins interpreting what she is saying to the person on the phone.
Example 1

S: FILMING? PRO\textsuperscript{researcher} FILMING? PRO\textsuperscript{researcher}

I: (looking at researcher, signs question) ASK-QUESTION PRO\textsuperscript{student} ASK-YOU
(begins speaking English to researcher) Are you taping now?

R: (Researcher responds in English from behind the camera) Yes.

I: YES. (brief pause) PRO\textsuperscript{professor} DISCUSS WILL NO HAVE OTHER PLAN
SOMETHING PLAN…

In the direct exchange previous to this example the student addresses the interpreter as a ratified participant in conversation. The interpreter is the primary author and principal of his utterance when answering the student’s question; however, when he transitions back to interpreting the professor’s talk, it is necessary to distinguish the change in footing. The interpreter’s eye gaze shifts to look at the professor and he uses the indexical point in the direction of the professor to clearly identify her as the source and principal author of the upcoming utterances. It is interesting to note that in Metzger’s study, as well as the analysis provided here, all occurrences of source attribution are directed to the Deaf interlocutor. The
interpreter does not author any utterances with the intent of clarifying for the hearing interlocutor whether an utterance originated from the Deaf participant or the interpreter. During the meeting between the professor and the graduate student, the interpreter did not have any footing shifts that resulted in direct communication with the professor where he authored his own utterances. Therefore it was not necessary for the interpreter to disambiguate when the Deaf student was talking.

Repetitions

Repetitions also fall under the category of relayings and include interpreter-generated utterances where the interpreter decides to repeat information or re-animate an utterance that was not repeated by the original speaker. In Metzger’s (1999) study, the student interpreter decided to repeat an utterance due to an overlap in the talk. In the professor-graduate student meeting, a repetition occurs when the interpreter grapples with relaying a portion of the talk when the professor makes an indirect request.

Toward the end of the meeting, after the student and the professor have discussed details related to the assignment, there are a few moments of silence and then a change in the direction of the talk. The student asks if he should revise and improve his transcript before the next class meeting. The professor replies, “Well could it be possible at all to get it to me by Monday?”

Example 2

S: YOU WANT ME IMPROVE NEXT-WEEK CLASS (pointing at paper intermittently) 
Do you want me to improve this for next week’s class?

I: So umm, you want this to be ready for next week’s class?

P: Well could it be possible at all to get it to me by Monday?

I: SAY POSSIBLE IF POSSIBLE GIVE-ME MONDAY? POSSIBLE GIVE-ME ON MONDAY ASK-QUESTION
[she] says Is it possible to hand it in on Monday? Is it possible to give it to me on Monday? I’m asking you.

The interpreter is faced with an interesting predicament in rendering the professor’s indirect request. The student is a graduate student and has some level of fluency with reading and writing English, but the interpreter must choose between rendering a more literal or more idiomatic translation of the message. He chooses a somewhat literal translation, but still understands that there is the underlying meta-message of the indirect request. First, he includes a source attribution that distances him from the message and indicates that he is reporting the professor’s words when he adds the sign “SAY [she says].” Next, he renders the professor’s words in two clauses, and repeats the lexical item POSSIBLE three times. Roy (2000) recognizes that the first clause contains grammatical information on the face that marks it as a question; however, in the second clause, the interpreter continues to use question marking on the face, adding a specific sign (ASK-QUESTION) indicating that a question has been asked. The repetition of the question three times is a departure from the professor’s single clause production of the question and therefore results in a shift in alignment. Roy also comments on the various elements that indicate the change of footing in this particular example:

Both linguistic and paralinguistic elements (the repetition and stress) in his translation are indications of a shift, a change in footing, in his alignment to the student. Within the discourse, co-occurring factors of language and situation, a professor talking to a student, serve to motivate a shift in footing and into a different aspect of his role. (p. 120)

The professor’s comment about turning in the revised paper on Monday is phrased as a question, but the meta-message is really an indirect statement conveying that she expects the student to have it ready by Monday. The interpreter inherently knows this, but also knows that indirect statements are challenging to interpret and subsequently includes multiple repetitions in
his attempt at rendering an equivalent message. The repetition in the interpretation is an example of a shift in footing in the interpreted interaction as the interpreter figures out how to relay the indirect request.

**Interaction Management**

Some interpreter-generated contributions have a function of managing the interpreted interaction. A variety of co-occurring factors may contribute to the need for the interpreter to coordinate communication. Metzger (1999) notes that an interpreter’s non-renditions can relate to the structure of the interpreted encounter. In the professor-graduate student meeting, three of Metzger’s categories of footing in interaction management occur: responses to questions, interference, and summonses. In addition, I analyze a recurring feature of the interpretation that relates to turn-taking management and propose a new sub-category for turn management.

**Responses to Questions**

Both Deaf and hearing interlocutors sometimes direct questions to interpreters as addressed recipients. Interpreting ideology maintains that interpreters are not supposed to answer direct questions and should pass on questions to a primary speaker to answer (Metzger, 1995). However, Metzger (1999) and Roy (2000) both argue that it is natural for speakers to view interpreters as participants in the interaction who are capable of answering questions. Metzger (1999) finds questions directed to the interpreter originated from both Deaf and hearing interlocutors in both the mock and actual medical situations.

In the academic meeting, I analyze one example where the student asks the interpreter a question. In the same part of the beginning of the meeting when the professor shifts her attention to answering and talking on the phone for a brief time, the student asks the interpreter if the researcher is filming. The interpreter recognizes the student’s direct question, accepts the shift in
alignment, and asks the researcher if she is filming. The interpreter first asks the question in ASL, but the researcher does not respond, so then he repeats the question in English.

**Example 3**

S: FILMING? PRO\rightarrow_{researcher} FILMING? PRO\rightarrow_{researcher}

I: (looking at researcher, signs question) ASK-QUESTION PRO\rightarrow_{student} ASK-YOU

(begins speaking English to researcher) Are you taping now?

R: (Researcher responds in English from behind the camera) Yes.

I: YES.

Although the researcher’s presence in the room ideally should not have an effect on the communication, the student poses the question to the interpreter, who then directs the question to the researcher. Since the researcher is positioned behind the student and answers in English, the interpreter then relays the answer back to the student. The researcher is not a primary participant in the interaction; however, the professor is busy answering the telephone and speaking to the person who called. Since the professor is not attending to the student, the student has the opportunity to treat the interpreter as a potential interlocutor. Roy asserts this is a common situation that happens in interpreted interaction and that for “primary participants…it must seem natural, even ordinary, to interact with interpreters as capable human beings who can answer and ask questions” (Roy, 2000, p. 107). When interpreters respond to questions directed to them, they must choose whether to accept the change in footing and answer directly or relay the question back to a primary participant in the interaction.

**Interference**

Interference is a type of footing shift that occurs as a result of the physical environment (Metzger, 1999). Midway through the meeting, there is environmental interference when
someone knocks on the door. Just prior to the knock, the professor finishes reading the student’s transcript and tells him that it is an acceptable example of a narrative. Next, someone knocks on the office door. The interpreter relays this environmental sound information to the Deaf person.

Example 4

P: Yeah, (ok sign) very good.

(knock on the door)

I: #YES VERY GOOD FINE. HEAR KNOCK PRO→door

P: It starts with the uh…somebody’s knocking at the door, by the way, let’s just ignore them.

I: PRO→professor START, PRO→door KNOCK #DOOR INFORM-YOU

The first time the interpreter informs the student about the knock at the door results in a footing change since it is an interpreter generated contribution. The interpreter relays the information before the professor verbally acknowledges the knock. The interpreter’s non-rendition is motivated by sound interference from the environment. The source attributions the interpreter includes in this same example are also evidence of a brief shift in footing. Because the professor does not generate the first comment about the door knock, it is necessary for the interpreter to then point at the professor and indicate a return to interpreting her talk.

**Summons**

Summons, or attention getting strategies, are another type of interaction management revealed in analysis of the professor-graduate student meeting. Metzger (1999) finds that the interpreters in the mock and real-life medical encounters include various kinds of summons as a way of informing the Deaf interlocutor that the hearing person has begun an utterance, including indexing and moving into the Deaf interlocutor’s line of vision. Hearing participants in conversation know when someone, such as an interpreter, begins to speak regardless of whether
they are visually attending to the other conversation participants. Nevertheless, communicating in a signed modality sometimes requires the use of specific attention getting strategies to ensure that the person sees the message being communicated.

There is one instance in the professor-graduate student meeting where the interpreter uses a summons to gain the attention of the Deaf student and directs his gaze toward another person who signs something. At the very end of the meeting the professor reminds the student that she needs a voice phone number where she can reach him if she needs to contact him after work hours. The student does not have an immediate answer for her and takes time to think about possible people whom the professor may contact. While the student considers possibilities, the interpreter notices the researcher attempting to get the student’s attention. The interpreter recognizes that the researcher is not in the student’s visual field, so he waves his hand in front of the student to get his attention and then points at the researcher signaling for the student to look in her direction.

Example 5

S:  NIGHT  WELL, YES… (pauses)
I:  Umm, hmm in the evening?
S:  (bends down and looks at something)
I:  There is one possibility. (waves to get student’s attention and points at researcher standing at the door behind the student) Pro→researcher
R:  (comments in ASL from behind the camera)
S:  (gestures with palm up in direction of the researcher)
I:  All right, well you can contact Cindy.
P:  (laughs) OK.
Although the researcher does not participate in most of the meeting, when the student struggles to give the professor a contact person, she intercedes and offers herself as an option. In the context of the situation, this is perfectly normal and acceptable because the student and the researcher were colleagues and classmates. Since the researcher stands behind the student, it is necessary for the interpreter to direct the student’s attention to the researcher so that the student can see what she has to say. The interpreter’s wave and gesture (pointing) toward the researcher are evidence of footing changes since the actions are interpreter generated and not contributions originated by the student or the professor.

**Turn management**

During the meeting, there are several instances where the interpreter coordinates and manages conversational turn taking between the professor and the graduate student. Roy (2000) analyzes turn-taking in the interaction and proposes different kinds of turns that are present in the interaction, including regular turns, turns with overlap, and turns with lag. Often, when the professor and the student have overlap in their talk, Roy finds that the interpreter manages turns with the use of the INDEX-HOLD\(^1\) gesture, thus informing the student to stop talking and giving the turn to the professor (see Figure 3). In addition, Roy analyzes examples where the interpreter offers a turn by using a “beckoning” hand gesture (Roy, 2000, p. 96) with his arm extended out and palm facing up to signal to the student that he has the opportunity to say something (see Figure 4). While Roy analyzes these features in regards to turn-taking, I also recognize that the same gestures made by the interpreter result in footing shifts during the interpretation. The shifts in footing are very brief, sometimes lasting only a fraction of a second, but are an important part of the interaction management that the interpreter engages in during the meeting. I group

---

\(^1\) Roy (2000) refers to this gesture as “WAIT-A-MINUTE.”
examples of both INDEX-HOLD and beckon hand gesture into a new sub-category under Interaction Management for evidence of footings shifts called Turn Management.

![Figure 3: INDEX-HOLD](image)

![Figure 4: beckon hand gesture (palm facing up)](image)

There are six different occurrences in the meeting where the interpreter uses the INDEX-HOLD gesture to give priority to the professor’s talk. In the example I show here, the professor finishes reading over the student’s narrative example and they begin to discuss details about how the student will go about “chunking” parts of the narrative. The professor and the student begin to talk at the same time and the interpreter signals to the student to hold his talk and yield the
turn to the professor. The example below follows the original transcript format, which shows the overlapping talk. The interpreter’s use of INDEX-HOLD is typed in boldface.

Example 6

Line 98  P: Umm…
I: RIGHT YOU MEAN CHANGE FIX-UP SOME NOW
S: YES

Line 99  P: Ch-Chunking
I: yes, I agree
S:

Line 100 P: I have no idea how
I: #CHUNKING PRO\textsuperscript{paper}Yeah, that’s gonna be
S:

Line 101 P: Chunking (laughs)
I: “WELL” Yeah, that’s gonna be
S: ALSO #CHUNKING (laughs) KNOW ME NOT-YET

Line 102 P: So that’s gonna be a very interesting
I: an issue Umm I don’t either INDEX-HOLD
S: UNDERSTAND HOW USE

Line 103 P: that’s gonna be a very interesting thing for you to work out.
I: THAT INTERESTING DEPENDS REAL INTERESTING YOU WITH
S: UNDERSTAND HOW USE

Line 104 P:
I: YOU WORKOUT.
S:

When the interpreter signals to the student to hold his talk and yield the turn to the professor, there is a very brief footing shift because the interpreter talks directly to the student as he manages the turn in the conversation. The INDEX-HOLD is interpreter generated—the professor does not ask the student to stop talking or say that it is her turn. Rather, the interpreter quickly assesses the situation with the overlapping talk and makes the decision to inform the student to let the professor finish talking first. Roy (2000) analyzes this situation at length in her study and notes that in the playback interview conducted with the student, the student did not feel as though the interpreter was rude or overly controlling in the situation. In fact, the student was grateful to the interpreter for informing him to hold his talk and yield the turn to the professor because the student came to the meeting to seek information from the professor and he was interested in what she had to say. Therefore, in regards to footing, the interpreter’s shift in alignment with the student each time he manages the turns in the conversation actually contributes to successful communication in the meeting.

Another way the interpreter manages turns in the conversation is through the use of the beckoning hand gesture. The interpreter uses the gesture twice in the meeting—one to offer a turn to the student, and once to elicit a response from the student. The latter example occurs in a segment of the conversation which Roy considers the most significant part of the interaction. In the part of the conversation used previously in Example 2, the interpreter intervenes and uses the beckon gesture to elicit a response from the student. The professor and the student have just finished discussing linguistic features of the student’s narrative transcript. The student asks if he should revise the transcript for next week’s class. The professor replies with an indirect request: “Well could it be possible at all to get it to me by Monday?” Since the student had told the
professor that he would be out of town that weekend, he repeats that information. The professor does not expect this answer and the conversation halts. The interpreter recognizes that the student should offer another answer, so he leans forward slightly and extends his arm out, palm facing upward in an attempt to beckon him to say something.

**Example 7**

S: **YOU WANT ME IMPROVE NEXT-WEEK CLASS**
   (pointing at paper intermittently)
   *Do you want me to improve this for next week’s class?*

I: So umm, you want this to be ready for next week’s class?

P: Well could it be possible at all to get it to me by Monday?

I: **SAY POSSIBLE IF POSSIBLE GIVE-ME MONDAY? POSSIBLE GIVE-ME ON MONDAY ASK-QUESTION**
   [she] says *Is it possible to hand it in on Monday? Is it possible to give it to me on Monday? I’m asking you.*

S: **MONDAY WELL ME B-A-C-K FROM ROCHESTER SUNDAY. (clasps hands together).**

I: Umm Monday? *(laughs)* Because I get back from Rochester Sunday.

P: Ok, umm. *(Looks up, then looks down at floor and bites lip)*

*(silence)*

I: *(Beckon gesture – extends arm out, palm facing up)*

S: **WEDNESDAY MORNING BEFORE CLASS?**

I: How about Wednesday morning before class?

The interpreter recognizes that the student’s response to the professor’s request does not match the typical response expected from an American student. Roy (2000) notes that typically students do not tell professors “no,” either directly or indirectly, when asked to submit an assignment. However, the student views this part of the conversation as a negotiation and doesn’t
realize his first response is uncommon. The interpreter knows that the student’s indirect response to the professor’s request is not the appropriate answer and, instead of interpreting the professor’s response, “Ok, umm,” the interpreter decides to beckon the student to provide an alternate response. The student complies, offers a solution, and then conversation continues. In this example, the interpreter takes a self-motivated turn that results in a shift in alignment and is evidence of a footing change. This brief gesture is interpreter generated and very important because it influences the course and the outcome of the conversation.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to take the framework Metzger (1999) developed for analyzing footing in the mock and real-life medical ASL/English interpreted encounters and apply it to a different set of data. My analysis reveals that five out of Metzger’s eight types of footing shifts exist in the academic meeting interpreted interaction. In addition, I demonstrate and support evidence that shows footing changes and interpreter-generated contributions that result from turn management are related to Metzger’s interaction management category. The evidence of interpreter footings in the academic meeting lend support to Metzger’s argument that interpreters generate utterances for a variety of purposes, and those utterances and contributions fall into two categories: relayings and interaction management.

The findings presented are derived from analysis of one case study of interpreted interaction; however, they may apply to other interpreters and participants in different types of interaction and settings. This study analyzed a face-to-face interaction with only two primary participants involved. However, future research could look at what types of footing shifts occur in interpreted interaction where there are more than two participants, such as small group meetings or a classroom where there is interpreted interaction with teachers and students.
In addition, it would be interesting to see how footing shifts in face-to-face interaction compare to interpreted interactions that take place through Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). Video relay interpreters are charged with interpreting from a distance via live video and audio for deaf and hearing people who are not in the same room and cannot see each other face-to-face. Video remote interpreters also work from a distance via video equipment, but in contrast to VRS, the hearing and deaf people they interpret for may or may not be in the same location. Further examination of what types of footing shifts are present in video interpreted interaction, and how and why they occur, is necessary to better understand how video interpreters interact with the people involved in an interpreted event.

Additional research about an interpreter’s footings with a larger corpus of interactive interpreting data would be beneficial to understand how interpreters’ footing types influence interactive interpreted interaction. Analyzing a larger set of data with different types of interaction and several participants would also allow for more generalizable results. Additionally, by including more participants, there would be more opportunity to ask the deaf and hearing participants about their perspectives and attitudes regarding footing shifts—once we know about footing shifts that occur in interpreted interactions, it is important to know how the conversation participants view those shifts in alignment. Is there a negative or a positive view on behalf of the deaf and hearing participants? Is there something that they prefer interpreters do differently to make the communication more successful?

Research about footing shifts is also beneficial for interpreting pedagogy. Metzger (2005) notes that research such as this case study provides evidence of what practicing interpreters do out in the field and provides a catalyst for educators to adjust interpreting pedagogy to better educate and prepare students for work. Understanding what kinds of footing shifts may occur
and how they may be beneficial or detrimental to communication in an interpreted event can impact the education of sign language interpreters who must negotiate boundaries and shifts in alignment with participants in interactive discourse.

Collecting more interactive interpreting data would also benefit research in other areas within the field. This study highlights the value of data. We can analyze and re-analyze data in different ways, looking through a different lens, and reveal new and interesting findings, even twenty-five years later. Nonetheless, constant advances in technology and changes with language and the people who use languages contribute to the need to collect new data and expand the corpus of data available for research within this growing academic field.

Metzger contends that interpreters are faced with a paradox of neutrality, and that an “interpreter cannot help but make choices that influence the outcome of interaction, and that in some way, influence the participants’ perceptions of one another” (Metzger, 1999, p. 155). The findings presented in this paper support Metzger’s (1999) and Roy’s (2000) arguments that interpreters are active participants in interactive discourse in interpreted communication and play a significant role in coordinating and managing the interaction.
References


