CHAPTER TEN: The Process of Interpreting

Chapter Summary

Readers are introduced to several interpreting models in an effort to understand the invisible mental steps in the process of interpretation. Prerequisite knowledge/skills are outlined and each phase of the interpreting process is discussed in depth.

To Focus Your Study

As you study this chapter, pay particular attention to the following ideas and information.

1. Identify early proponents of interpreting models and outline the steps common to all of these models.
2. Define cohort groups and explain how this concept impacts on the interpreting process.
3. Explain analytical thinking and cognitive competence.
4. What is involved in the overall monitoring process used by an interpreter?

Learning Activities

In Your Own Words

The information in this chapter build part of the foundation of understanding in your work as a sign language interpreter. Record the most significant points learned in this chapter and why they are important to your journey of learning.

Interpreting Process

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: Describe the interpreting process in your own words. Now look at how our “experts” describe the process in the file “The Process of Interpreting” on the companion CD for this chapter. Make any additions or changes to your description of the process after listening to the experts.
LEARNING ACTIVITY #2: Research two of the models listed on page 234 in chapter ten of the textbook. Present a summary of each model, along with a visual representation of the steps or phases of the interpreting process to your classmates or to your study group. Identify similarities or differences between the models, and between the models and the steps outlined in Chapter Ten of the textbook.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #3: In the video clips on the companion CD for this chapter titled “Finding Deep-Structure Meaning” and “Re-formulating the Message Into the Target Language” our “experts” describe “going for meaning,” “dropping form,” “looking for deep structure meaning,” and “going beneath the words.” In your own words, describe what you believe they are talking about.

1. NOW, observe the work of other interpreters, focusing specifically on the depth of processing. It is important for you to recognize the difference so keep looking until you observe interpreters who ARE dropping form and those who ARE NOT dropping form. (Remember, this is NOT about judging the work of another person; it is about honing your observation and critical thinking skills so you can become an effective practitioner).

   - In your observation journal, note contextual information to the best of our ability (who is present, the type of setting, participant goals).
   - Can you identify the reason the interpreter is or is not dropping form?
   - In a polite and respectful way, ask the interpreter why s/he made the choice to drop form or not to drop form — there may be things influencing their decision you are unaware of.

2. If you are already interpreting (whether as a professional practitioner or as a student), video tape your English-to-Sign work and look at it. Are you typically following the grammatical structure of English? Conveying the words without going to the implied or deeper meaning?

3. If yes, why do you think this is happening in your work? If not (in other words, you ARE dropping form and going for meaning), what strategies are you using that allows you to do that? (Review information in the textbook if you need help with this question).
Review the textbook discussion of reciprocal signals then look at the file “Reciprocal Signals in Action” where you will see excerpts of our experts using reciprocal signals in real-life interactions. Now look at how our “experts” describe how reciprocal signals affect their work as interpreters in the file “Reciprocal Signals: An Interpreter’s View.”

**Multi-Tasking**

View the video clips in the file titled “Multi-Tasking” on the companion CD for this chapter. Reflect on your own ability to juggle multiple mental and physical tasks and set goals for yourself in this area in your journal.

**Study Questions**

1. Interpreting process models have been proposed by ... (circle all that apply):
   - (a) Seleskovitch
   - (b) Joos
   - (c) Ingram
   - (d) Cokely
   - (e) Colonomos

2. Common components found in all interpreting models include ... (circle all that apply):
   - (a) Identify meaning apart from source language form
   - (b) Require simultaneous interpretation
   - (c) Maintain grammatical and lexical form
   - (d) Switch from source to target language
   - (e) Note the importance of paralinguistic elements of meaning

3. _______ is the process which allows an interpreter to identify essential elements of meaning in a text, including overt and implied information. (circle all that apply):
   (a) Consecutive interpretation
   (b) Bilingual-bicultural philosophical model
   (c) Simultaneous communication
   (d) Discourse formulation
   (e) Message analysis

4. Taking in the source language … (circle all that apply):
   (a) Is an inconsequential first step in the interpreting process
   (b) Requires the interpreter to attend to the incoming message until s/he is able to make sense of what is being said/signed
   (c) Is a step in the interpreting process that is sometimes under-valued
   (d) Includes the interpreter’s ability to physically perceive the incoming message
   (e) Assumes linguistic and cultural competence

5. Reciprocal signals … (circle all that apply):
   (a) Include non-verbal indicators that one is attending and comprehending (or not comprehending) the messages being received
   (b) Are found in both English and ASL
   (c) Are present in messages but are not critical in the work of an interpreter
   (d) Are identical in all languages and cultures
   (e) Can be divided into real-world and abstract signals
6. Deep structure meaning ... (circle all that apply):

(a) Can be found by discovering within both the linguistic and the paralinguistic elements of an utterance the meaning intended by the speaker/signer

(b) Is found primarily in scientific and technical texts

(c) Is found only in formal registers

(d) Refers to the prep work required of an interpreter prior to beginning an interpretation

(e) Is best represented by maintaining form between source language input and target language output

7. Deep structure analysis answers such questions as ... (circle all that apply):

(a) Who is here?

(b) What is the agreed upon length of turns between the members of the interpreting team?

(c) Why in the world did I accept this assignment?

(d) What overt and implied affective information is being conveyed and how does it influence or change the meaning of the speaker/signer and the relationship between participants?

(e) What is the goal or purpose that is causing the speaker/signer to use this particular grammatical and discourse structure, humor, metaphors, etc.?

8. Linguistic competence required of interpreters includes having ... (circle all that apply):

(a) English and ASL as B and C-languages

(b) A sufficient store of lexicon in both English and ASL

(c) The ability to use discourse formulation and discourse markers in both languages

(d) Knowing how to accomplish six speaker goals in both languages

(e) Ability to analyze deep structure meaning in English and ASL
9. Critical thinking skills ... (circle all that apply):

(a) Involve to the ability to break the whole into its parts, to examine in detail, to look more deeply into a text and to determine its nature

(b) Are required of a sign language interpreter

(c) Involve disciplined reasoning, inferring and deducing in order to extract the message carried “between the lines” as well as the information explicitly stated

(d) Are rote, menial-level reasoning skills

(e) Include the ability to rapidly scrutinize the incoming text to determine its features, recognizing and making accurate connections between new idea and previous information

10. Awareness of one’s cohort group is significant for sign language interpreters because ... (circle all that apply):

(a) One’s cohort group determines a person’s critical assumptions and ways of interpreting

(b) One’s cohort group influences her/his beliefs toward life-shaping concepts

(c) One is only allowed to team interpret with a member of her/his cohort group

(d) The presence of individuals from different cohort groups may signal a need for cultural expansions in the interpretation

(e) An interpreter only interprets for individuals of the same cohort group as the interpreter’s.

11. Monitoring the process refers to ... (circle all that apply):

(a) Checking on the accuracy of your interpretation in process

(b) Monitoring your body temperature

(c) Identifying errors and planning on repeating them next time

(d) Asking for clarification as needed

(e) Making choices regarding transit time to next job