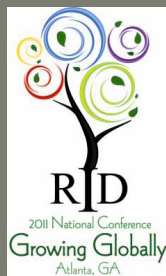


# Challenges in the ESOL Classroom: Interpreting for Deaf International Students



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## Schema

- Schema - an underlying organizational pattern or structure; conceptual framework. Plan or diagram.
- The speaker usually has a plan for what they will say.
- As you listen to a message you create a schema based on what you are hearing, an expectation for what will come next.
- Schemas are based on **your** experiences.

## Objectives of this workshop:

- Discuss the nature and experience of deaf international student(s) in mainstream American classrooms
- Explore interpreting techniques used in ESL classroom
- Explore Interpreter's Role in an ESL classroom
- Explore Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) in relation to this unique population

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## Definitions

### ESOL/ESL Class



ESL: English as a second language

ESOL: English for Speakers of other Languages

### Students



- -Deaf & International status in ESL or mainstream class
- L1 –native language
- L2 – acquired second language

### Interpreters



- -a qualified professional

## Scenario: You are interpreting for....

- 1 international deaf student, freshman in mainstream classes, who depends on an electronic dictionary to learn new English vocabulary
- Grew up oral-deaf, mainstream Japanese schools -
- Started learning ASL and English 3 years ago upon arriving in the USA
- Enrolled in Sociology 101 class of 129 students in a lecture hall
- Today's discussion is on Culture and Language
- You read the chapter related to the topic

## Ten minutes into the discussion....

- The teacher says, "Is it okay to use the N word?"
- Hearing students respond, "It depends on who is using the N word." Many students join in the discussion regularly referencing "the N word".
- You expand your interpretation of "the N word" as....

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## Finally...

- The deaf student raises eyebrows, cocks head to the side and frowns she asks for interpreter clarification “N is this new sign?” “spell word?”
- She looks up the word you spelled in her electronic dictionary and looks even more confused. She reads you the definition.
- The electronic dictionary says: “Word used during slavery era.”

## What was going on here?

- Do you think the deaf student WILL stop the teacher to ask for a clarification?
- Do you think the interpreter WILL stop the teacher and ask for explanation for the students benefit?
- What would you have done?

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## Review of the Literature

- Reveals little to no research on interpreting for deaf international students
- Finding resources to train or help interpreters apply best practices in this environment is difficult to locate and/or piecemeal.
- Difficult to find policy on placing deaf international students in ASL or ESL classes.

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### ESOL/ESL Class



- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- ESL curriculum may be developed with hearing students in mind

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## Methods/Models of ESL Teaching:

- Audio-lingual Method
- Whole Language
- Multiple Intelligences
- Competency-Based Language Teaching
- Communicative Language Teaching
- Cooperative Language Learning

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## Demand-Control for ESL Classroom

- Paralinguistic: All the students are international and have accents
- Interpersonal: Instructors unsure how to work with interpreter(s) in this aural based environment
- Intrapersonal: Feelings about Deaf oppression being displayed by other students (based on cultural norms)
- Environmental: Personal hygiene of students of other cultures

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## Students



- Spoken languages v. signed languages
- Diverse levels of achievement
- L1 v. L2 learning
- ASL grammar
- Code switching

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## Working between modalities

- Spoken Language
  - English is a low context language
  - Repetition of synonyms
- Signed Language
  - ASL is a high context language
  - Many synonyms have the same sign with varying degrees of expression

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## Learning L2 via L3?

- Do deaf international students have a fully developed L1?
- Learning 2 second languages at once: English and ASL
  - There are so many fundamental differences between the two languages
  - Fingerspelling may be a new skill altogether

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## Code switching

- Do international deaf students understand the concept of switching from ASL to signed English in the ESL classroom?



## Sign language grammar

- Structures common to most signed languages
  - Pronoun system
  - Constructed action/Dialogue/Role Shifting
  - Depicting verbs or classifier system
- ASL Structures
  - Fingerspelling
  - Code switching

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## Examples of L2 misunderstandings

- Source: When you need to make an appointment call the front office and speak to the receptionist.
- Target: Need appointment? Call (tty call) o-f-f-i-c-e.
- In their country did they have TTY? And/or a system to call a hearing person. When they learned ASL since coming to the US did they learn VP/VRS for call?

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## Survey of Maryland Colleges

- 9 MD Colleges replied to the survey
- 3 have had Deaf International Student in last 5 years in ESL course and traditional courses
- 3 colleges have no policy to evaluate deaf international students prior to enrolling in coursework regarding their ASL competency
- 1 college uses an outside Consultant to evaluate ASL competency

## Focus Groups

- International Deaf Students (13 participants)
  - 2 from Japan (1 male, 1 female) both grew up oral deaf in mainstream schools
  - 1 from Korea (female) grew up oral deaf
  - 1 from Portugal (male) mainstreamed school signer
  - 9 from Saudi Arabia (9 males) all signers, all deaf school programs, all teachers hearing not fluent signers

## ESL Teachers Focus Group

- 8 ESL Teachers participated:
  - Years of teaching experience and degree:
    - (2) 2 years, (4) 3-5 years, (1) 12 years, (1) 23 years
    - (1) BA, (5) MS/MA, (1) MS.Ed, (1) PhD
  - Education that prepared them to work with deaf students: Only one teacher had had a graduate level course in Special Education
  - 6 were American born and educated and 2 teachers were not.

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## Interpreter Focus Group

- 5 interpreters participated in the Focus Group
- (2) pre-certified (1 more than 13 years experience interpreter, 1 less than 5 years in the field), 3 certified (between 7 – 30 years experience)
- All American born and educated
- 0 had received special training to work with international deaf people

## Focus Group Results – Conducted Spring 2011

### Students



- Lack fundamental k-12 education
- No previous use of interpreters

### Teachers



- Were trained in ESOL/ESL/EFL
- 90% had never had a deaf student or interpreter in class before
- 50% had no in-service or formal education in deaf or special education

### Interpreters



- No formal training working with deaf international students
- Struggle with CPC, interpreter training and role of interpreter working in the ESL classroom

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## Focus Group suggested:

- Preconference with instructor
- Strategies for High Visual Gestural consumers
- Slower speed (sign and fingerspelling)
- More gestures and expansions
- Cue to indicate Code Switch
- Using other tools – Google Images, White Board, other students (translation in home country sign language)

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## What's next Macro Level?

- Our profession needs more research into best practices for working with deaf international students
- Collaboration between ESL/ESOL and interpreter professions
- ITP/IPP's can include multicultural training/dialogue into curriculum

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## What's next Micro level?

- Cultural and Multicultural awareness/sensitivity training
- Become "Globally Culturally Competent"
- Become a student of linguistics

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## Interpreters



- Role
- Training
- Intercultural knowledge of consumers' national origins

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## CPC and Standard practice

- What is the role of the interpreter in the ESL classroom?
  - (2.3) Render the message faithfully using language most readily understood by consumers, and correcting errors discreetly and expeditiously
  - (3.1) Consult with appropriate persons regarding the interpreting situation to determine issues such as placement and adaptations necessary to interpret effectively
  - (4.1) Consider consumer requests or needs regarding language preferences, and render the message accordingly (interpreted or transliterated).
  - (4.4) Facilitate communication access and equality, and support the full interaction and independence of consumers.

## International Deaf in ESL and the CPC?

- Some factors to keep in mind:
  - Expansion - signs for English words
    - Learning a new word in English
    - Learning a new sign in ASL
    - Both

When and how do you KNOW that the confusion is the result of the ASL or the English?

Example: a student asks “What mean F-L-I-R-T?” v.  
“What mean flirt?”

## Impact of Deaf International Students in American Schools:

- Greater understanding and use of Universal Design for teaching in the ESL classroom
- Hearing International students are exposed to deaf compatriots learning – which changes stereotypical views
- Deaf International students expand their view on human rights
- Interpreters become more culturally aware

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## Resources

- MIUSA, Mobility International USA; “Away Topics” English Language Learners with Disabilities Issue, July 2011. [www.miusa.org/ncde](http://www.miusa.org/ncde) Mobility International USA
- [www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org) World Association of Sign Language Interpreters
- “Deaf People and Human Rights” WFD Report 2009

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Thank you ! Please feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns.

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