Characterizations of conference interpreting by sign language interpreters

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Characterizations of conference interpreting by sign language interpreters

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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and Communication Equity

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Signature of Program Director
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I start by acknowledging the d/Deaf and hard of hearing people who have allowed me into their conference lives; it is because of you that I am able to do the work that I love, and I am beyond grateful. Your trust in me is the foundation of this work.

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DEDICATION

In 2007, Doug Dittfurth hired me for the Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf conference, providing my first conference interpreting experience. Scarcely one year later Chris Grooms encouraged me to apply for my first national conference, setting me on my path to ruin; in the ensuing 11 years, I have been honored to be invited onto over 70 conference interpreting teams. I have had the privilege to meet and work with some of the kindest, most unique and talented people in the field. We have shared prep sessions, fourteen hour days, stolen afternoons at the pool, pain killers, lip gloss, chocolate, team meetings, and many, many group texts. We’ve done work so intense that we’ve tried to crawl into each other’s brains, tested each other’s stage composure with questionable gestures from the back of the room, eaten countless plates of banquet “chicken”, solved ALL the problems of the world in the bar, and made each other laugh harder than my heart (and bladder) could hold. You have helped me celebrate my best work, and supported me through my worst. The work we have done together in hotels and conference centers across the country has inspired this thesis - you are all my Unique Special Snowflakes, and I am a better interpreter and human because of you. This work is dedicated to each of you.

Word of the day: Gratitude          Sign of the day: LOVE
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ABSTRACT

The definitions and characterizations of conference interpreting work found in the literature primarily refer to the work done by spoken language interpreters. As many American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreters currently work in conference settings, it is important to define and characterize conference interpreting for this group of practitioners. A mixed methods approach was used to learn about the experiences of sign language interpreters working in conference settings. This paper will discuss the inherent features of conference environments experienced by sign language interpreters, ways in which conference work differs from generalist work, and the changes in the process by which sign language interpreters begin interpreting in the conference setting.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Foregrounding Conferences

People have long been coming together to nurture common goals and interests. These meetings or conferences of individuals can be organized around a shared industry, profession, hobby, or support of a cause. Professional conferences, often organized by professional associations, allow practitioners in a specific field to come together to discuss matters of the organization, changes or developments, and the state of the profession as a whole. Academic conferences narrow this focus even further by focusing on the researchers doing work in a specific discipline, such as Sociology, Geography, or Special Education. These conferences are a venue for these researchers to come together and engage in discussion about their work and exchange information with one another.

Conference attendees choose to attend conferences for a variety of reasons. Cherrstrom (2012) says that “Attending a professional conference is an effective way to explore and advance knowledge, skills, and careers” (p.148). VanZandt and Andersen (1992) believe that “conferences provide opportunities for growth in both personal and professional ways,” and that “conferences are some of the best places to meet people who are your ‘type’. You’ll enjoy some of the same interests, but still find variety that makes for the ‘spice’ in both personal and professional relationships” (para. 6). Additional benefits of professional meeting attendance can include “faculty involvement and support, experiencing the diversity of the profession, inter- and intradisciplinary collaboration, preparing and giving presentations, attending sessions and caucuses, committee participation, networking, mentoring, and social events” (Mata, Latham, & Ransome, 2010, p. 451).
Academic conferences often follow a very specific structure. While some professional conferences may consist of longer workshops where theory is presented and then put into action, academic conferences are typically comprised of shorter presentation sessions. These presentations can feature single or multiple speakers, and often include time for discussion of the presented works. In addition to shorter presentations, there may also be panel presentations and round table discussions centered on specific issues or emerging trends in the field.

The number of deaf\textsuperscript{1} and hard of hearing professionals is increasing, as evidenced by the establishment of organizations such as the Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss in 2002, and Deaf in Government in 2010. As their numbers increase, so does the need for them to access their professional conferences through sign language interpreters. Interpreters are frequently being called to interpret in conference environments; even to the extent that some interpreters claim a specialization in this type of work. An exploration of professional literature has found few publications regarding the topic of conference interpreting for sign language interpreters. (See Stone and Russell, 2014; Gajewski Mickelson and Gordon 2015; Sheneman and Collins, 2016; Supalla et. al., 2016). In response to the dearth of research, this study aims to explore the ways in which sign language interpreters conceive of and define conference interpreting. This research is a necessary first step to pave the way for further exploration.

Statement of the Problem

Preliminary research into the field of conference interpreting done by ASL-English interpreters reveals a notable gap in literature addressing the work of sign language interpreters in conference environments. Specifically, it is not clear how the notion of conference interpreting

\textsuperscript{1} A lower case ‘d’ is used throughout the writing in order to be inclusive of the lived experiences of all people with hearing loss who use sign language (Ladd and Lane, 2013).
is defined by practitioners. For this reason, I have chosen to research the question: How is conference interpreting characterized by ASL-English interpreters?

The answer to this question is crucial to understanding the ways in which ASL-English interpreters conceive of and engage in this work, and the ways in which the work we label “conference interpreting” differs from conference interpreting work as defined by our spoken language colleagues. This research will be the first step in identifying this work setting as a true specialty setting for sign language interpreters, in much the same way we currently conceive of legal interpreting, medical interpreting, and interpreting in performing arts. With this understanding and view of the work, there can then be an opportunity to create a larger dialogue about work in conference settings, including the identification of skills necessary for the work, development of standard practices, and the creation of training materials for interpreters working in this setting. In this way, this research will produce a meaningful, foundational contribution to the profession. This research, and any research that it foregrounds, may result in a more complete and accessible conference experience for deaf and hard of hearing people attending conferences in order to create networks, learn or hone skills, present their research, and receive any other benefits from their participation.

It is of note that this research has been conducted within the United States, and that all participants and the researcher live and work within an American context. The results of this research will, therefore, represent an American perspective on conference interpreting work, and may not be generalizable to sign language interpreters engaged in conference work in other countries. DeWit’s (2016) discussion of conference interpreting by sign language interpreters in Europe provides a perspective on and discussion of the work being done by sign language interpreters in European contexts.
CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Spoken Language Interpreters in Conference Settings

Existing research about spoken language interpreters working in conference settings is plentiful; it is, in fact, the basis for much of the research that has been done about interpreting. Originally viewed as a discipline within the field of Translation Studies, Interpreting Studies has evolved into a genre in its own right (Pochhacker and Schlesinger, 2002). Gile (2000) notes that the earliest writings considered to be interpreting research weredone by practitioners, and were accounts of their observations of and experiences with the profession. These initial writers were followed by research done by psychologists who were not themselves interpreters, and was not well received by the interpreting community Gile (2000). According to Gile’s (2000) history of interpreting research, it wasn’t until the late 1980s that interpreting research, conducted by interpreters, began to take a more scientifically, empirically oriented focus. The literature discussed in this section will focus on the history of conference interpreting, the training and education of conference interpreters, and research on conference interpreting, all of which has been centered on the work done by spoken language interpreters.

History

Researchers often begin their discussions of conference interpreting by tracing its history to its roots in the early twentieth century (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014; Pochhacker and Schlesinger, 2002). Baigorri-Jalon (2014) devotes an entire volume to chronicling this history, beginning with the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, through the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-46, generally held as the era which gave birth to the profession. His research discusses how historical events, such as the founding of the League of Nations at the end of World War I, necessitated the work
of interpreters in ways that had not existed before. Interpreters at this time specialized in diplomatic relations, often interpreting for world leaders and government representatives. Their work was done using consecutive interpreting, which Gile (2009) defines as “a form of interpreting in which the speaker and interpreter alternate when speaking” (p. 259). The interpreters engaged in this work had a large amount of visibility and personal recognition, as they were always seen alongside the leaders for whom they worked (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014).

It wasn’t until the period between World War I and World War II (1918-1939) that simultaneous interpreting first emerged. In 1928, the technology used for this work was first tested by the International Labor Organization (ILO) for their international conferences (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014) which allowed “the speaker and interpreter (to) speak at the same time” (Gile, 2009 p. 259). This mode of interpreting, named simultaneous interpreting, became the exclusive mode of interpreting used during subsequent conferences (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014). There are several things about Baigorri-Jalon’s (2014) account that are of note, the first being that this conference was the first instance where women were noted as practitioners. Additionally, the use of simultaneous interpreting allowed for a multitude of languages to be provided to participants, not just the few languages that had been provided in the past. Of greatest interest may be that the interpreters formerly working in the consecutive mode were very resistant to this mode of interpreting, as they would “be deprived of the visibility and prestige afforded by the consecutive mode” (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014, p. 252). After World War II, the Nuremberg trials were held between 1945 and 1946. These trials were conducted exclusively via simultaneous interpreting, leading to the adoption of this mode of interpreting at the United Nations, and influencing the establishment of conference interpreting as a profession in both diplomatic and non-diplomatic contexts (Moody, 2007). Additionally important was the
realization that interpreting was a skill that could be acquired, not just an innate talent possessed by those who were bi- or multi-lingual (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014). This history gives a schema with which modern day conference interpreting can be considered and analyzed.

**Training and Education**

Multiple authors (see Seleskovitch, 1989; Gile, 2005; Baigorri-Jalon, 2014; Setton and Dawrant, 2016) discuss training and education in conference interpreting. These discussions range from the first training programs established for conference interpreters (Baigorri-Jalon, 2014), to chapters outlining the content and process of training (Gile, 2005), to entire texts putting forth a curriculum for training (Setton and Dawrant, 2016). While her earlier works are highly respected and often cited in the literature, Seleskovitch’s (1989) chapter describes the component parts of speech and the importance of teaching speech analysis to interpreting students. She also offers a recommended order of teaching for interpreting skills, beginning with consecutive interpreting and moving through to simultaneous interpreting (Seleskovitch, 1989).

Baigorri-Jalon (2014) discusses the first course in simultaneous interpreting occurring in 1928, given by the ILO, and notes that this was the first instance of interpreters being taught to function in a role rather than being placed there as a result of their knowledge of languages and willingness to interpret. In Gile’s (2005) chapter on this subject, he details proposed content for interpreter training and outlines the stages of learning through which students progress. He gives suggestions about selecting source materials, using theory to guide practice, and adapting the curriculum to non-standard environments (Gile 2005). Setton and Dawrant’s (2016) volume on conference interpreting is one of the newest in the field. They offer discussion of the interpreter’s job, the skills and proficiencies that are necessary, and break down the task of...
interpreting with chapters on consecutive interpreting, sight translation, simultaneous interpreting, and professionalism (Setton and Dawrant, 2016).

Researchers have discussed the requisite skills and competencies for conference interpreters, in the context of methods by which these can be taught. Gile (2005) notes the various linguistic and cognitive skills that conference interpreters must possess, such as “mastery of speech comprehension” and “familiarity with accents and intonation patterns” (p.129). Much of the other research related to skills deals with the differences between the modes of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting (Moser-Mercer, Lambert, Darò, & Williams, 1997; Gile, 2005; Setton and Dawrant, 2016), and the skills and competencies required for those types of interpreting specifically, all discussed within the context of conference interpreting.

**Research**

Scholars have also talked about the types and kinds of research being done in the field. Pochhacker and Schlesinger’s (2002) offer many of the seminal articles in interpreting studies, providing insight into the history of the discipline and its evolution “as a discipline within the broader framework of translation studies” (p.4). Gile’s (2000) look at interdisciplinary research in conference interpreting describes some of the interpreting research that has been done by psychologists, linguists, and sociologists. He highlights the benefits of research methodology that these practitioners bring to interpreting research, and provides some guidance for those wanting to engage in this type of research. Gile’s (2006) article on conference interpreting also provides an excellent overview of interpreting research, handbooks, and symposia findings. Pochhacker (2009) reports on a corpus of 40 different survey research studies, examining types, sampling methods, and topics included in these studies. Gile (2015) also has later work in a chapter that focuses on the contributions of cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics. This
volume of research spans over 70 years, and provides both foundation and context for the work that spoken language interpreters refer to as conference interpreting.

**Sign Language Interpreters**

Research into sign language interpreting finds the discipline situated within the wider context of translation studies, with the earliest publications appearing in 1964 (Roy and Napier, 2015). Much of the research in the field has been done by hearing practitioners who are also researchers, deaf practitioners who are also researchers, and deaf researchers. The literature discussed in this section will focus on the history and professionalization of sign language interpreting, training and education for sign language interpreters working in conference environments, and research involving sign language interpreters working in conference settings.

**History**

Prior to 1964, sign language interpreting in the U.S. was done by friends and family members of deaf individuals needing interpreting services, and was mostly done without compensation (Roy and Napier, 2015). With the passage of several laws (e.g., The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1965, Education for All Children Act of 1975) and the establishment of government grants, deaf and hard of hearing people using sign language were able to receive funding to assist with their pursuits of higher education and/or employment (Pochhacker and Schlesinger, 2002; Moody, 2011; Roy and Napier, 2015). This, in turn, created a demand for sign language interpreters, and a system which would support their work. Sponsorship of a series of workshops by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration in the mid-1960s led to the development of a sign language interpreting manual, as well as the establishment of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (Moody, 2011; Roy and Napier, 2015).
During the mid-1970s to early 1980s, additional legislation was passed (e.g. The Court Interpreters Act of 1978), providing even more access to deaf and hard of hearing individuals and further increasing the need for interpreting services. The U.S. government responded by funding interpreter training programs, which led to a need for educators to share resources and necessitated research to guide teaching practices (Roy and Napier, 2015). This period saw the emergence of research on interpreter training for sign language interpreters, as well as the first instance of spoken and sign language interpreters coming together to share research (Roy and Napier, 2015).

As the 1980s progressed, “sign language interpreting researchers and educators turned to spoken language colleagues for perspectives on both research and education” (Roy and Napier, 2015, p.123). Interpreting education in the US saw a move to bachelor programs at the university level, which led to the “demand for academic and research publications” (Roy and Napier, 2015, p. 124). Though the field of sign language interpreting research was definitely influenced by those established researchers whose work was largely done on spoken language conference interpreters, conference interpreting for sign language interpreters has been rarely addressed in the literature.

**Training and Education**

The field of sign language interpreting often has specific curricula for interpreting in specialized settings, such as the State of Alabama’s week long Mental Health Interpreter Training, and research was sought that similarly mentioned conference interpreting as a specialized setting. Neumann Solow’s (1981) resource book lists platform interpreting as a discreet setting. While Nelson’s (2016) work on interpreter preparedness indicated that conference interpreting is a specialty area, and even used experience in conference interpreting
as inclusion criteria for participants, Walker and Shaw’s (2011) article on preparedness for specialized settings did not name conference interpreting as one of their specialized settings. This indicates that there may not be consensus about the status of conference interpreting as a specialized setting within the interpreting community.

Neumann Solow’s (1981) resource book, written to assist in the training of sign language interpreters, is one of the first to mention the work of sign language interpreters in large event settings. She names this “platform interpreting” and describes the different types of events and venues where this type of work may occur. Neumann Solow (1981) provides information about visual access of participants when the interpreter is situated on a stage or platform, the importance of lighting, the adjusting of signing space for these venues, and working with team interpreters. Her recommendations for successful interpretation in these settings include increased preparation time and effort and solid backgrounds to improve visibility. As this work was written at a very early time in the history of sign language interpreting research, there is no empirical data influencing the work, nor is there any mention of requisite skills for interpreters engaging in this work.

While sign language interpreting is mentioned in other works, such as Setton and Dawrant’s (2016) course on conference interpreting, no definition or discussion of the work sign language interpreters do in conference environments is put forth in the literature. This gap in the literature points to a need for curricula which directly address the skills necessary for sign language interpreters engaged in conference interpreting work.

Research

Instances of conference interpreting for sign language interpreters as a singular topic of research are few. Those that do exist are often case studies of an aspect of a singular conference.
One of the earliest publications of this type is Llewellyn Jones’ (1981) paper discussing the uses of British Sign Language (BSL) versus Signed English in formal settings. Rather than focusing on aspects of the conference setting itself, he looks at style choices made by interpreters and the language choices they make when interpreting a source text (Llewellyn Jones, 1981).

Stone and Russell’s (2014) chapter on deaf interpreters working into International Sign at an international conference begins by describing conference work as “unidirectional work from one language to another” (p. 140). Their chapter discusses deaf interpreters’ participation in conference work and the working relationships that they have with their hearing team interpreters, and presents an analysis of recorded portions of interpreting work, as well as information about the teams’ perceptions of their work with each other. Stone and Russell (2014) also discuss the preparation (reading materials, rehearsing interpretations of these materials, etc.) that team members did relating to their functioning as a cohesive team. This theme of preparation is one that emerged in other readings discussed in this section.

Sheneman and Collins (2016) focus on the work done by deaf interpreters in their chapter on interpreting international conferences, specifically as it pertains to preparation and communication strategies. This work looks at a transnational conference held in the United States in 2012. The researchers analyze portions of the interpreted product, and highlight themes that emerged during interviews with the conference interpreters, such as preparation, logistics, collaboration, and rapport (Sheneman and Collins, 2016). Of note is the authors’ statement that in their specific case, interpreting services were requested without adequate time to procure interpreters based on skills and competencies, and that they believe this to be representative of the coordination of most conferences in the United States (Sheneman and Collins, 2016).
Two articles deal with the coordination of interpreting services for conferences. Gajewski Mickelson and Gordon’s (2015) article on intentional teaming addresses many points about interpreter quality, skill, and knowledge. Their focus is not on the work done in the conference setting, but on the intentional team forming process that occurred around the 2012 National Symposium on Healthcare Interpreting (Gajewski Mickelson & Gordon, 2015). Gajewski Mickelson and Gordon mention a number of what they call “high-demand” situations, where the interpreters assigned dealt with unexpected challenges (2015). The article describes the ways that this intentional process impacted the interpreting team, the presenters, and the participants at the symposium, and offers recommendations for the coordination of interpreters at future conferences (Gajewski Mickelson & Gordon, 2015).

Supalla, Clark, Neumann Solow, and Muller de Quadros (2016) focus on the conference setting from the perspective of access for deaf researchers attending a conference. They outline an access protocol that was developed for the 2006 Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research conference. The authors sought to create a structure that would allow full access for deaf researchers attending this particular conference that could then be used for future conferences. Consideration of both planning and structure of the conference was considered, as were those of interpreting service provision; emphasis was placed on the critical nature of input from the deaf professionals attending the conference (Supalla et. al, 2016). Their work speaks to the need for a defined structure for selecting appropriate, qualified interpreters for specialized conference work, and lists numerous challenges for interpreters working in these environments, such as rapid speech being read from frozen text, speaking away from the microphone, and going over their time limits (Supalla et. al., 2016).
One article from the RID VIEWS discusses conference interpreting by explaining the strenuous nature of the work, and providing a guide to applying and preparing for work on conference teams (Arthur, 2007). Other information may be found about sign language interpreters in conference settings, such as standard practices for coordinating interpreters for conferences have been put forth by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (2007), and the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) Guidelines for positioning sign language interpreters in conferences (AIIC, 2016). These documents provide valuable information for those working in conference environments, such as direction on placement of interpreters, suggested materials used for preparation, and guidelines for coordinators of interpreters in conference environments; however, none of these documents defines the conference environment, much less mentions qualifications or necessary skills of the interpreters doing the work.

The studies about sign language interpreters working in conference environments generally assume some amount of prior knowledge on the part of the reader. If a definition of conference interpreting is given, it is generally simplistic (e.g. “unidirectional work from one language to another”, by Stone & Russell, 2014 p. 140), assumes that the reader already has a shared meaning of what is meant by the term conference interpreting, and does not acknowledge the differences between conference interpreting as defined by spoken language interpreters versus the work done by sign language interpreters that is labeled “conference interpreting.” It is the goal of this study to provide a picture of the ways sign language interpreters characterize this work, so that it can be more clearly understood by scholars and practitioners alike.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study has been conducted using a mixed methods approach. Creswell (2009) describes mixed methods research as that which uses both quantitative and qualitative data in order to harness the strengths of each type of data, noting that the combination of both types of research can yield more insight than either alone. The research design included quantitative data collected via a survey instrument, and qualitative data collected via interviews. These methods were connected (Creswell, 2009), meaning that analysis of the quantitative data from the first phase of the research (the survey) informed the data collection of the qualitative data in the second phase of the research (the interviews) by creating the pool of interview participants. Though the survey data could have been used to guide the interview data collection, the constraints of time and instructional program structure did not allow for that type of linkage. The survey questions have informed my thinking, if not the creation of the actual interview questions, in my approach to this project.

Quantitative data asking about interpreters’ experiences with interpreting in conference settings were gathered via a Qualtrics survey instrument. The survey was piloted with a group of approximately 13 interpreters before being disseminated nationally; their observations, along with discussions with the research advisor, resulted in the final question set (see Appendix A). Participants were recruited using network sampling (Hale and Napier, 2013); any interpreter currently working as an ASL-English interpreter was invited to participate in the survey. The survey instrument collected information using what Hale and Napier (2013) describe as
behavioral questions, which attempt to understand what interpreters are doing in conference settings.

The final question of the survey asked participants to identify someone they characterize as a model conference interpreter. These names were compiled and sorted to determine which interpreter’s names were given most frequently. The five most frequently named interpreters were contacted to request interviews.

Data Collection

A Qualtrics survey instrument was used to collect responses in the Fall of 2017. The survey was open for four weeks, from mid-November to mid-December 2017, and a total of 355 responses were registered. Of these 355 responses, 80 responses registered no data and were removed from the data set, leaving 275 respondents who advanced in the survey. Demographic questions were placed at the beginning of the survey; these responses were analyzed and compared to RID’s demographic data in order to determine representativeness of the sample. Immediately after the demographic questions was an open text question asking participants to define conference interpreting. All survey participants were allowed to answer this question, and there were 239 responses recorded; all narrative responses described as “conference definition question” or “conference definition from the survey” are based on these 239 responses. The question following this asked participants if they had interpreted in conference settings; the 25 participants who selected ‘No’ were not presented with any additional questions, and were directed to the end of the survey.

Once the 25 ‘No’ responses were subtracted from the 275 validated survey responses, this left a total of 250 respondents who replied that they did experience working in conference settings. Of these 250 participants, 12 did not answer any additional questions, resulting in 238
participants who responded that they had interpreted in conference environments and answered some number of the remaining survey questions.

The survey instrument produced 112 discrete names of individuals whom survey participants named as model conference interpreters. One of these names was that of the researcher, a result that may be attributed to the priming effect of having the researcher’s name on the recruitment email. Of the 111 other names given, the most frequently named interpreters were given 10 times (one interpreter), 8 times (one interpreter), and 6 times (two interpreters). All five of these interpreters were contacted and asked to participate in interviews, and all five of them agreed. In-person interviews were scheduled with all participants during the month of January 2018, and post interview emails were sent to all participants with a link to a demographic survey, also conducted through Qualtrics. Winter storms resulted in the cancellation of one flight, and the inability to interview one of the five participants in person. This interview was therefore conducted using the Zoom online video meeting platform, mid-February 2018.

Video interviews are gaining popularity with researchers collecting qualitative data from participant interviews (Hanna, 2012; Janghorban, Roudssari, & Taghipour, 2014; Nehls, Smith, & Schneider, 2015). Past options to replace face-to-face interviews have included telephone interviews and email or chat room technologies, both of which have limitations, including the lack of visual cues in telephone interviews (Hanna, 2012), and the asynchronous nature of electronic communication (Janghorban et. al. 2014). Video software has allowed interviewers to use common technology (laptops or tablets with web cams and high speed internet) to retain the real-time nature of face to face interviews while allowing participants to have access to both verbal and non-verbal cues (Janghorban et. al. 2014; Nehls et. al., 2015). It is for these reasons
that it was determined that a video interview would be an acceptable substitute for a face to face interview with the final participant. The interview was approximately the same length as the in person interviews, and there were no major technological glitches experienced due to either internet connection or errors in use of the program.

**Population/Participants**

My goal in conducting this study was to collect experiences from all interpreters engaged in work they identify as “conference work”, regardless of location or professional affiliation. Efforts were made to disseminate the survey as widely as possible, including posting on RID’s social media website, and direct emails to all RID Member Sections and the Presidents of all RID Affiliate Chapters with requests to share with their members. It is of note that Affiliate Chapters may have members who are and are not certified by RID.

As the number of individuals who received the survey is unknown, a response rate is not able to be calculated. According to its 2017 Annual Report, RID claims a total membership of 14,618 interpreters; not all of these members may have social media, or belong to member sections that may have shared the survey. Additionally, network sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling method (Hale and Napier, 2013) and therefore the results of this study may not be representative and generalizable. It is therefore quite difficult to comment on the sufficiency of the response rate for the research, though the response rate could be compared to other graduate level research using similar inclusion criteria and distribution methods to determine efficacy of this particular distribution plan.

Several pieces of demographic data were collected for this study, including audiological status, ethnicity, education, credentials, number of years in the field, and geographic location. Of the responses analyzed (n=273), 89.01% (n=243) of participants identified as hearing, 5.13%
(n=14) identified as deaf, 2.93% (n=8) identified as hard of hearing, and 2.93% (n=8) chose the ‘Other’ option. Findings here are somewhat similar to those published by RID (2017), who report the representation in their membership as 96.17% hearing, 2.64% deaf, and 1.17% hard of hearing.

Participant ethnicity was also calculated, as seen in Figure 1. There were 273 participants who responded to this item, and the overwhelming majority of these (n=228) identified as white. An equal number of participants (n=9) reported African American/Black ethnicity, mixed ethnicity, and preferred not to answer. Hispanic (n=7) and Latina/o/x (n=6) ethnicities accounted for 4.76% of the respondents; participants also identified as Asian (n=3), Caribbean Islander (n=1), and Aztec Indigenous (n=1), given by participant response in the category ‘Other’.

![Survey Participant Ethnicities](image)

**Figure 1.** Ethnicities of survey participants

Comparing these to the statistics from RID’s 2017 data, there is some degree of similarity in the breakdown of ethnicities; of the 9514 of their members that answered demographic questions, RID reports similar numbers for several ethnic groups, with 87.1% of their respondents identifying as White (n=8291), 49.2% identifying as Hispanic/Latino(a) (n=264), 4.87%
identifying as African American/Black (n=463), and 1.87% identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander (n=175) (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2017).

Survey participants were asked to disclose which credentials they held, and given a list containing 47 certificates from state and national credentialing systems. Of the 258 participants who responded, a total of 38 credentials were chosen. The six most common credentials held by respondents are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Six most common credentials reported by survey respondents

These credentials represent a mix of state qualifications, such as the QA exam, and national certifications, such as the RID certifications. The categories here are not discrete; individuals may hold more than one credential.

Of the 270 respondents who shared the highest level of education completed, almost 73% (n=199) indicated that they have a Bachelors or Masters level education.
Other respondents report varying levels of education completed (see Figure 3).

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the number of years that they have been working in the interpreting field. A total of 266 participants responded to this question, with experience ranging from one year, to over 46 years practicing in the field (see Figure 4).
One notable aspect of this response pattern is that 79% (n=211) of all respondents have been working as interpreters for eleven or more years.

Geographical data for respondents were collected; each of the regions identified by RID were included in the survey (see Figure 5).

![Number of Interpreters by Region](image)

*Figure 5. Number of survey participants by region*

The highest number of respondents report living in the Southeast region, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland & the District of Columbia (Potomac Chapter), Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Least represented is the Pacific region, consisting of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington state. While RID reports is highest membership in the Southeast region (n=3668), the Pacific region actually contains its second highest number of members (n=3355), indicating that the survey was either not circulated as widely in the Pacific region, or that a large number of members there chose not to participate.

Interview participants (n=5) followed somewhat similar demographic patterns as survey participants. All interview participants identify as hearing, only one chose an ethnicity other
than White, and among them, they hold the following credentials: RID: CSC, RID: CI, RID: CT, RID: SC: L, RID: NIC-Advanced, BEI-IV, BEI-Court, and EIPA 4.0 or above (not RID Ed. K-12). Two interview participants hold master’s levels degrees, two hold bachelor’s degrees, and one participant has an associate’s degree. While three interview participants are from the Southeast Region, the other two participants are from the Midwest and Pacific regions. Interviewees have been working as interpreters in the range of 16-40 years.

Data Analysis

The data from this study were analyzed using a variety of methods. Quantitative data were retrieved from Qualtrics in a CSV file, and sections of the data were then copied into Excel in order to focus on different topics. Graphic representations of the data were downloaded from Qualtrics and used to visualize patterns in the data. The first question on the survey was an open text field asking participants to give their definition of conference interpreting. These responses were copied into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed for themes based on the content of the responses.

As mentioned, qualitative data were collected via participant interviews, using spoken English. Four of these interviews were done in person, one via Zoom web based video conferencing; all of the interviews were video recorded using an iPad mini, and audio recorded using an iPhone. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, using an Interview Guide (see Appendix B), as well as notes made during the interview which led to follow up questions unique to the content of each interview (e.g. flexibility in conference environments, and the importance of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills). These interviews were then

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2 Demographic data about interview participants is kept intentionally vague in an effort to maintain the confidentiality of their comment.
transcribed and analyzed in two different phases. In the first phase, which Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) call ‘open coding’, transcripts were read line by line in order to fully consider each participant’s comments, and to identify main points or ideas from each of their answers. Next, using ‘focused coding’ (Emerson et al., 1995), the transcripts were again analyzed to determine which specific portions of the transcripts led to the coding of the themes identified during the open coding process. These ideas and themes were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and grouped together based on more broadly identified categories. This quantification of the qualitative data (Creswell, 2009) enabled the comparison between this and the quantitative data collected from the survey. For example, themes centering on preparation for work in conference environments and self care were moved into the broader category of ‘compensatory strategies’ used to negotiate the complexity of the environment.

Once themes from the survey and interview data sets had been identified, they were compared in order to begin to identify areas of overlap. Again, broad categories began to emerge, and sub themes were able to be grouped into these categories. Due to the study design and the nature of the semi-structured interviews, there are some discrete themes that appear in the interview data that are not supported by any of the data collected in the survey.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the ways in which sign language interpreters characterize conference interpreting. It is important to begin by acknowledging that I am an active practitioner in the field of conference interpreting, and to be aware of the ways in which my personal beliefs about the work will influence the interpretation of results. Emerson et. al. (1995) address this, and caution that “ethnographic writings are inevitably filtered through the perceptions, experiences, and commitments of the ethnographer” (p. 130). It has been my goal to represent the comments of my participants in the way that I understood them to be presented.

The qualitative portion of this study included five interviews. These interviewees bring between 16 to 40 years of interpreting experience to this study, and were chosen by survey participants as model conference interpreters, whose work is exemplary in the field. Here we will learn from Phil, Leah, Brad, Melvin, and Fiona about their experiences interpreting conferences. Throughout this study, I have used pseudonyms chosen by interview participants in order to preserve the confidential nature of their comments.

In this chapter, I will first discuss three of the characteristics of conference interpreting as reported in definitions of conference interpreting given by survey participants. I will then present the ways study participants report that conference interpreting differs from generalist interpreting work, such as that related to employment or the receipt of services. I will end with a discussion of the process of entry into the field of conference interpreting, using reports from the quantitative data about training and education surrounding conference interpreting, and anecdotes from the qualitative data that illustrate what seems to be an evolution in the field.
One notable factor that was implicitly and explicitly addressed by both survey respondents and interviewees is the difference between interpreting conferences that are by and for sign language interpreters, such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) conferences, or meetings of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), and conferences at which interpreters are present only in service to the deaf attendees. The distinction between these types of conferences was not made in any of the study questions; however, differences between these types of conferences emerge in the context of several of the broader themes that will be discussed here.

**Features Inherent in Conference Environments**

Survey participants were asked to share their definition of conference interpreting in an open text field. There were 239 responses to this question recorded, ranging from the simplest of definitions (“interpreting for a conference”) to definitions that considered audience, register, duration, and purposes of conferences. While the word ‘conference’ appeared in 68 definitions, it is largely unhelpful in defining the work itself. There were, however, three prominent features of conference environments that were most frequently given by survey participants: the shared or specialized field of those attending conferences, the different types of sessions included in conferences, and the high visibility of the work interpreters do in conference environments.

**Shared Fields and Interests**

One of the key parts of the definition of ‘conference’ is the sharing of “common concern” (Conference, n.d.). This was reflected in 66 survey respondents’ definitions of conference interpreting, which indicated that attendees share a topic of interest, or specialized field. Definitions illustrating this theme include gathering “around a common interest of a particular
context,” sharing a “professional or personal interest and/or vocation,” being “specific to a discipline,” having “common goals/concerns,” and including topics that are “under a similar content umbrella.” Respondents to the survey question regarding types of conferences survey participants have interpreted yielded the following results, with academic, disability related, and business themed conferences being most prevalent. In addition to the types of conferences listed in Figure 6, survey respondents also said that they work in conferences of the following types: governmental, technical/scientific, sports-related, hobbyist/enthusiast, and those relating to identity.

![Types of Conferences Interpreted](image)

*Figure 6. Types of conferences interpreted by survey participants*

These ideas of conferences having shared and/or specialized fields emerged in several of the discussions I had with interview participants. Leah talked about knowledge of a particular field as one of the criteria by which interpreters may be selected for conference teams, saying “So you might get called because you’re seen as a SME… you know, subject matter expert.”
This ‘insider knowledge’, or lack thereof, can strongly impact the work done in a conference setting, as Melvin pointed out during his interview,

Knowing their acronyms or knowing what is important to their field because I'm not a member of their field, I'm this outsider coming in, trying to convey information, to people who have their own language… their own verbiage, their own acronyms.

In Fiona’s discussion of a conference focused on Deaf Education, she commented on the organization of the conference into “an interpreter track, a parent track, and a professionals track,” indicating that even within a larger specialization, there are sometimes separate interests of groups of individuals interacting in various ways under the larger topic. Each of these groups would then carry their own unique language, goals, and concerns, which may overlap or be completely discrete from the other groups.

**Types of Sessions**

The most popular theme, found in 78 of the definitions provided, is that work in conference environments involves a variety of types of sessions. In addition to the session types asked about in the survey (see Figure 7), participants also listed group discussions, conversations between colleagues, escort/social interpreting, lectures, seminars, board meetings, and tours as types of sessions included in conference contexts.
Survey respondents often added information about the kind of interpreting done in each type of session, with comments such as “platform interpreting for keynote speakers; 1:1 interpreting for clients in Expo,” and “a mixture of platform interpreting, small group interpreting, and escort/social interpreting.”

Many of these same session types were discussed by interview participants during the course of our conversations; they added informal question and answer sessions, reports from work groups, regional caucuses, and prep meetings with presenters to the list of types of sessions interpreted. Interview participants added some context to certain session types. One of the interviewees, Phil, talked about the bearing of skill on the assignment of session types, noting that the “more experienced, seasoned interpreters on the team” handle plenary sessions and high level presentations, and talking about his eventual assignment to those types of sessions as his career progressed. Fiona, another interview participant, also discussed the types of sessions as related to skills needed due to the demands they carry. Of plenary sessions, she states “Usually
that’s some of the more complex, not necessarily like technically complex, but it’s usually rhetorically complex work in a plenary” and that “workshop demands are mostly just logistic.” Melvin talked about the ways that the role of the deaf participant in each type of session influences the work of the interpreting team in both number of interpreters needed, as well as role assignment.

**Stage/Platform Work and Visibility**

Another popular theme, mentioned 73 times in survey respondent’s definitions, was the concept of conference work being conducted on what was identified as a “stage” or “platform” and the resulting “visibility” from this placement. Some survey respondents indicated that there was a difference between conference interpreting and platform interpreting, stating that conference interpreting “could include platform work,” is “not always synonymous with platform interpreting, but often these overlap,” and “is a subset of platform interpreting… platform interpreting becomes conference interpreting when it is a conference.” For other survey respondents, there was no differentiation between platform and conference interpreting, which can be seen in the definitions “working at a platform level,” “on stage/front of an audience,” and “platform interpreting in a conference setting.” Along with presence on a platform comes interpreter visibility, which was noted in respondent definitions such as “high visibility platform interpreting,” and “requires visible stage interpreting.”

The theme of visibility was addressed by interview participants as well, with the added perspective that it isn’t only an interpreter’s work that is visible. In regard to work at interpreting conferences, Phil commented, “Many times there were students in the audience observing, as well as working interpreters who were newer to the field, who would observe.” He added that
“People are always watching, even when you’re not in the interpreter’s seat.” During her interview, Leah echoed these sentiments, saying “We’re so visible” and “We’re just always on display.” Brad and Fiona both spoke of the challenges inherent in controlling facial expression when interpreting content about which they have strong emotions. Fiona addressed this saying, “I need to watch my face… if I’m thinking or doing anything, everyone is going to see, don’t roll your eyes, you’re gonna be in trouble.” Melvin acknowledged a different perspective, discussing working from sign language into spoken English in non-interpreting conference settings:

When you are doing voice to sign, it's something that only a very few people in the room, generally, depending on the type of work, maybe everybody signs, but generally very few people in the room are accessing information through you or could access information through you. Only very few people know how good a job you’re doing or paying attention to you with - in a meaningful way, you know. But when you are doing sign to voice, that's something that the majority, for the most part, the majority of the people in the room are accessing through you. I think that's part of where some of the pressure comes from… suddenly, it's not just these one or two people who are depending on you, it's this whole room full of people depending on me. And even just the physical dynamics of, “I’ve got a microphone in front of my face.” If my team feeds me something too loudly, that feed goes through the microphone, and now you are hearing chatter, you are hearing somebody say something, somebody else correcting them, that person fixing it.

The quality of visibility that comes with stage/platform interpreting, and its sign language to spoken language equivalent, certainly adds an additional layer of complexity to the work that interpreters are doing in conference settings.
The visibility experienced by sign language interpreters is one of the largest differences between the work spoken language interpreters and sign language interpreters do in conference settings. In his work on the history of conference interpreting, Baigorri-Jalon (2014) describes how the change from consecutive interpreting performed while standing alongside world leaders, to simultaneous interpreting performed via technology while the interpreter is not seen, meant that the interpreters who had “great visibility and personal recognition” (p. 247) no longer received this level of visibility. Sign language interpreters working in conference environments are often on stages alongside speakers in front of audiences of thousands of people. When working from sign language into English while interpreting for deaf presenters, their work is sometimes available to all audience members, and can be captioned and projected onto screens in conference rooms; Fiona acknowledges of work that is captioned, “If somebody wants it, they can have the transcript and look at it later.” In this way, sign language interpreters’ work can become part of official organizational records, visible for years after it is produced.

**Differences from Generalist Work**

The qualitative data indicate that many respondents consider conference interpreting work to be quite different from the generalist work done by interpreters in non-conference settings. While the field of sign language interpreting does recognize various sub-specialties, such as legal interpreting, educational interpreting, medical interpreting, and mental health interpreting, through systems of certification, assessment, and specialist training at both state and national levels, conference interpreting is generally not discussed in these terms. The review of the literature found that only one source (Nelson, 2016) named conference interpreting as a specialized field; additionally, when asked “Have you ever attended a workshop or training that specifically focuses on interpreting in conference settings, for sign language interpreters?”, 61%
(n = 205) of survey respondents indicated that they had not done so. In addition to being set apart by the technical specificity of the language used and the visibility of the work discussed in the previous section, results indicate that conference interpreting is also set apart from other types of interpreting by the skills needed, the timing and pacing of the work, and the elements of teamwork required.

**Required Skills**

Both qualitative and quantitative data sets contained multiple references to what I have categorized as ‘hard skills’ and ‘soft skills’. Hard skills are those related to the actual interpreting that an individual does in the conference setting. These skills include comprehension of a source message and production of the interpreted product in the target language. The soft skills discussed are those related to an interpreter’s interactions with and within the conference environment, and include flexibility, agility, and endurance, among others.

**Hard Skills.**

In their definitions of conference interpreting, survey respondents discussed register, and mentioned working at “a higher register” where the setting requires “formal or instructive register,” “speakers use consultative, expository, formal, and/or frozen source language,” and “turn taking is very rigid so the interpreter typically cannot interrupt the speaker.” The adjective “high” was used in 19 definitions, and was included in phrases like “high skill,” “high profile,” and “high level” when talking about the interpreting work as well as the interpreters carrying out the interpretation. The concept of expectations of the interpreters were mentioned in some definitions, as “the expectation is for highly skilled interpreting in both signed and spoken
languages,” and that anyone engaging in the work should be a “role model and top of your game interpreter.”

Looking to the interview data, all five interviewees addressed the importance of interpreting skill. Leah noted this in a lighthearted mention of the requisite ‘hard skills’, with her comment “Do you actually interpret? (laughing) Do you understand the deaf people, do you understand the hearing people, or can you make a reasonable facsimile?” Phil’s discussion of ‘hard skills’ included “a high level of competence, because conference interpreting is not a setting to start off in. You need to be well versed in interpreting from sign to spoken English, as well as spoken English to sign.” He states that deaf presenters “expect that the interpreters assigned to their presentations will be able to interpret accurately without stopping them or asking for clarification too often.” When Brad and I discussed these skills, he noted that interpreters wanting to enter conference settings “should be very much in command of their languages, at least to the point of being consistently clear and not requiring too much on the part of deaf people,” and that the setting often requires “having interpreters who are experienced in technical, and by technical, I just mean unfamiliar but specific vocabularies.” Melvin notes that, “In general, conference work is more demanding, more difficult, requires a certain level of skill and expertise and experience.” Fiona, when talking about these ‘hard skills’, said,

You just really have to know how to manage both the speed, the complexity of the information and the media that goes with it. So I find the statistical complexity in some of these things really, really hard. Particularly, if you can't manage the information flow.” She also stated that “It's helpful if you have a pretty good vocabulary range in both languages, it's helpful if you're good in the registers, particularly the higher registers and academic discourse, if you understand rhetoric.
Most interview participants noted that the interpreters they work with in conference environments are generally very skilled. Phil comments that, “At the conference interpreting level, the teammates I worked with were all very competent.” Brad agrees and states, “When conference interpreting is working at its best, I really like it because you get a high quality, high caliber of team.” However, his statement holds the implicit indication that conference interpreting doesn’t always work “at its best”; in fact, interviewees explain the difficulties that can arise from having interpreters on a conference team that do not have the appropriate ‘hard skills’ to accomplish the task. Brad explains, of interpreters who struggle in conference environments that some,

 Aren’t really that competent generalists, and here they are in this environment where they are not capable of making sense at all. And they don’t even know that they’re not making sense. They don’t even realize to an extent that they are meant to be processing. So, you may end up suddenly having to be a leader on everything when you just wanted to be a teammate.

In a discussion about a specific conference situation, Fiona confirms Brad’s experiences, though in her situation the interpreters were new to conference interpreting. When talking about how this impacted the scheduling of this particular conference, she explains,

 It does put a bigger burden on the experienced interpreters because you become, you know, a guide, a mentor, and in some cases, you become always the lead, always the lead, always the lead. So it ups the workload on the rest of the team. I was back to back to back to back, which would be fine if both of us were sort of equally competent.
These issues, along with the issues of timing and pacing discussed in the next section, show the multilayered nature of the challenges found in the conference environment.

**Soft Skills.**

‘Soft skills’ were another recurrent theme for both survey respondents and interview participants. In their definitions of conference interpreting, survey respondents indicated that conference interpreting “requires a great deal of composure and clear problem-solving strategies in order to manage the complex communication.” It also “requires great flexibility, skill, patience, and humor.” These definitions indicated that interpreters engaged in the work should “be flexible and fluid to be able to fit the needs of the conference and participants,” and should exhibit “cooperative team attitude, positivity, flexibility, and endurance required; brilliant brain; must be brave” with “flexibility being the key,” because “the ability for interpreters to prepare varies, and the work is somewhat less predictable.” Interview participants wholeheartedly echoed all of these sentiments, with ‘soft skills’ being the focus of several of our discussions. When I asked directly about the skills they thought interpreters should have in order to do this work, their responses had several common themes. Fiona’s suggestions for conference interpreters are that they,

Have to be wildly curious, confident, but not over confident. You have to be really quick because things change so much. I think flexibility and that quickness to kind of keep assessing and seeing what’s the thing that needs to be done. You have to have really good negotiating strategies and self talk, so that you can get what you need… and be flexible for that kind of stuff.
Phil started his list of requisite skills with a discussion of hard skills, then said, “Second quality is flexibility. Flexibility (with your schedule) also with your teams. Conference interpreting requires you to have a demeanor about yourself, where you conduct yourself professionally at all times.” In her discussion of soft skills, Leah noted that conference interpreters have to be skilled in,

Getting along with different personality types. Knowing yourself, knowing what your triggers are, knowing what not to do. Being able to take care of yourself... Be friendly, be professional, show up on time, be appropriately dressed, really not taking things personally.

Melvin’s response touched on elements of professionalism and flexibility, and added,

How well you get along with the people you work with is huge. There’s an element of professionalism that you need to have… how you dress, how you just behave in public. Do you have a certain air of poise and respectability about you? You have to have the ability to present yourself as a professional. Flexibility is huge, because things change… you never can quite foresee all of the things that are going to happen, and so you have to be willing to roll with the punches.

Brad included these themes of flexibility as well, adding the approval of deaf clients to the list of must-haves, and making a very interesting point about an interpreter’s appearance:

Be really real about yourself and your skills. You need to have been told by deaf people in that field or related fields that ‘Yeah, you work for me. What you do, keep doing it.’ You need to have that sort of Gumby flexibility, knowing the bends that are likely to happen, even if they don’t. I wear a suit at conferences. At a conference, professional, to
be unmarked is sort of to be dressed up, and that way people don’t think twice about how you are dressed. But if you are not, then you are marked.

Of the two types of skills discussed, all of my interview participants spent more time in discussion of the ‘soft skills’ required of interpreters in conference environments. These skills were given when I directly asked, as in the question discussed above, and also appeared in discussions about the other themes presented here, such as teaming, and the pace of the environment.

**Timing and Pace of the Environment**

Another feature of conference interpreting that seems to set it apart from the work interpreters do in other settings is the timing and pacing of the conference environment. Both survey and interview participants made reference to elements of what I will refer to as pacing, which includes the logistics of navigating the spaces in which conferences are often held, the demands of the conference schedule, and the duration of the work. Survey participants made mention of these elements over 30 times in their definitions of conference interpreting. When discussing the duration of the work, respondents noted that conferences are “typically several days long,” lasting “for a significant chunk of a week or weekend,” and that “typically conference work is long hours”. Melvin also spoke of this during our interview, saying confirming that,

There’s this sort of longevity factor sometimes in the conferences… you’re there all day, sometimes 7, 8 hours, sometimes 10, 12, 14 hours. And there’s an expectation of your ability to keep doing… a more intense version of the work that you normally do, and
doing it for a really, really long time. And if things aren’t scheduled properly, with very few breaks.

According to Leah, conferences are “Long days and packed”. Her perspective on duration included observations that,

A conference is, it’s eight hours, and it’s pretty much eight… maybe it’s seven and a half, maybe you have a half hour off for lunch. Even if you do, you’re in the interpreter room, looking at prep, or talking to your team, or like trying to talk somebody down from the ledge.

Another challenging aspect of the pace of a conference can be the logistics of the physical environment. In their mentions of these spaces, survey respondents stated that they are “convention space,” “large group setting,” and require “excellent navigational skills.” Brad talked about the logistical challenges in relation to scheduling, saying that people “who are scheduling, they don’t have a grasp of how far you have to get from one to another.” Fiona talked about logistical challenges in relationship to needing to talk with other interpreters while moving from one session to another, stating that “Depending on how, literally how physically far apart the spaces are, that can be hard too.” The survey question asking which venues interpreters have experienced when doing conference interpreting work yielded the following results (see Figure 8).
Figure 8. Types of venues in which survey participants have interpreted conferences

All of these are large scale buildings and campuses, which require some amount of either prior knowledge or wayfinding to navigate successfully.

Scheduling was mentioned as another contributor to the challenging pace of conference work. Survey respondents said that “the work is somewhat less predictable in terms of schedule changes, room locations, etc.,” even though conferences were described as having “structured agendas”. Continuing his discussion about the relationship between scheduling and logistics, Brad mentioned that sometimes a meal time may need to be at some “really off time” due to logistics, and that other interpreting demands may have to be squeezed into time that might have appeared to be free. Fiona also discussed the scheduling of meals; her comments were in relation to having multiple team members, saying “One or two of us will go to lunch with the person, the other ones will take a break, we’ll switch off, that kind of stuff.” About the need to be flexible with scheduling, Brad remarked “I do try to just think about, I’m here for whatever,
and I don’t try to think of it so much as my time as long as I’m staying healthy and functional.”

Leah alluded to the mental demands of conference scheduling, saying,

Timing is challenging. It’s not like, ‘Wow I had a really tough hour gig just now’… and now I’m going to get lunch. It’s like no, now I’ve got 10 minutes to transition, to go pee, and to transition into the next 45 minute block.

Phil talked about the use of breaks in the schedule to accomplish teaming functions, stating “Many times our schedules are so hectic there’s not time for a lengthy debrief, so we take advantage of those breaks during workshops.”

Several other comments from survey participants spoke to the challenges of pacing in conference interpreting, commenting that conference interpreting is “eclectic, high stress interpreting,” is a “highly stressful, dynamic environment, that is constantly changing,” and that interpreters working in these contexts must “provide flexible, polished, and dynamic access for all participants”. Leah talked about the way that pacing makes conference environments different by saying:

Conference demands are simply a concentration of demands… not worse than other jobs, they are just back to back… the time pressure of it that’s session after session after session… the compressed nature of it, the fact that you’re back to back to back, so that makes it different.

Fiona described the pace as a positive aspect for her experience, noting that, “People overwhelm me… I like (having a task) it keeps me in the game all the way through and…. Makes people leave me alone so then I can just restore my own energy.” Negotiating the quick pace of the environment surely requires some of the ‘soft skills’ discussed in the last section, and will likely
present different levels of difficulty for interpreters based on their backgrounds and personal preferences.

**Team**

The theme of the conference interpreting team came up repeatedly in both sets of data as a unique quality of conference interpreting work. The survey addressed aspects of team with questions about the size (number of interpreters) of conference teams with which participants had experience. Teams ranging in size from 2-9 interpreters were most commonly reported (see Figure 9).

![Size of Teams](chart.png)

*Figure 9. Size of interpreting teams in conference environments*

This data was corroborated by responses from the conference definition question, 29 of which mentioned working in teams as a defining characteristic of conference work. Some respondents predicated their definitions on the size of the interpreting team (“team of interpreters (more than 2)”; “working as a team member with a group of nationally certified sign language interpreters”), while others noted qualities and function of a team (“providing accesses based on consumer
preference as a flexible team”; “requires a significant amount of team camaraderie”). Leah agrees with the size of the interpreting team being one of the defining factors in labeling something conference interpreting, saying, “For me, one of the requirements is… that there's a larger team of interpreters, that it wouldn't just be two”; Fiona also uses the number of interpreters involved to define a conference team, stating that, “It's the idea of multiple interpreters trying to provide multiple services, but functioning together as a group… To me, that's a team, bigger than just the two of us.”

Other aspects of teaming identified by interview participants are the challenges and benefits brought about by working in large teams with interpreters who may or may not be known to each other. Leah notes that there may be teaming “challenges having to do with maybe being teamed with somebody you don’t normally work with, especially if it's a national team. I feel like people have really different feelings about, you know, what does it mean to team.” Phil discussed the advantages of having team interpreters with various skills, commenting that, “Presentations that dealt with linguistics, to me, were complex, and if I had a teammate who had done their grad work on linguistics then it was a match made in heaven!” Melvin also mentioned the benefits that team can bring, offering that,

When you know your team, when you trust them, when you know that because of their skill- a combination of their skill level, their personality, their approach to the work, their attentiveness, their approach to teaming, when you know that they are there for you, it lets you as the on interpreter relax, focus.

One of the questions in the survey asked participants about their experiences with captioning providers in the conference interpreting environment. Respondents indicated a
variety of frequency of work with captioning providers, a factor of conference interpreting work which was also discusses by interview participants. In fact, their comments highlight the way that captioners and interpreters work together in conference environments.

**Figure 10.** Frequency of work with captioning providers in conference environments

In our discussion of his work with captioners at RID conferences, Phil explained:

Many regional conferences I did would use the same captionists over the years, and so we just developed friendships and so that just made it easy. There were many times they would lean over to me, when I was in the supporting interpreter role, and ask me for something that was said that they missed, so we had a good bond there. I would hopefully position myself in a way so I could see the screen, see the captioning, and I would use that and sometimes if I missed something, I could turn and see it right there. Or, my team could see it and feed it to me.
Brad described the same kind of ongoing relationships with the captioning team at a conference for which he interprets annually:

We try to help them out as much as we can in terms of, if we get prep material, to make sure they got it. And we, since we know the players who are always at the conference, if we know, oh so and so, deaf person is getting up to speak in English, one of us might just go over and sit next to the captioner so we can re-voice if necessary. I mean, we rely on them a lot for the, just the various things we do, we want to make sure they have what they need.

In Fiona’s account of her work with captioners, she recalls,

Oftentimes we will actually have a person who’s designated - whose secondary job is to keep an eye on the captioner. So if you have got a deaf person who is using their voice, not particularly clearly, pop over to the captioner and do a little voice over stuff, so that they can make sure that they understand. Or if it's some topic that it's one of those insider topics that we know that gets thrown out there, to be the one to… (feed) the captioner as you go. So we will - if we’re lucky enough to be near them, that's what we will do. That's with them. Sometimes we’ve actually been the one who calls for a break for the captioner because we’re a team but they are not.

Brad described one additional benefit to the use of captioning in relationship to interpreting. His account described the advantages for deaf presenters in settings where the sign to spoken English interpreter’s work is being captioned, offering,

I’ve always really liked having the captioning such that when you are working into English, it's evident to the deaf people, they can see what the product is and how the deaf
person on stage - and they usually can see it, a monitor turned their way - so they know how they’re being represented. I think that’s been a boon for our profession and for deaf professionals and deaf people in general.

His comments represent an additional layer to the element of visibility discussed previously, and add the element of accountability for the interpreted work product to the individual producing the source text.

**Training, Entry, and Evolution**

A discussion about the ways in which sign language interpreters characterize conference interpreting would not be complete without a look into the training of interpreters for this work, the ways in which interpreters enter this field, and the changes that are occurring for those working in conference settings. This section will address training as reported by survey participants, focusing on participant experiences with both formal and informal education. It will then look at processes of entry as related to interpreting-themed conferences and conferences that are not interpreting-themed. Evolution of interpreting in the conference environment will conclude the discussion.

**Learning Conference Interpreting**

Survey participants were asked to answer questions about their training for work in conference settings. These questions asked about participants’ experiences with education on interpreting in conference settings presented in workshops, in interpreter training programs, and in mentoring relationships. While there are other ways in which interpreters learn about conference interpreting, such as independent studies, or short courses, the survey did not address those types of learning activities.
Though many sign language interpreters have been educated in interpreter training programs, this is not the case for all interpreters; many interpreters enter the profession via alternate routes, and use workshop attendance to further their knowledge of the field. Workshops may be restricted to a specific pool of participants selected via specific criteria, or open to interpreters of all skill and experience levels. When asked about their participation in workshops or trainings geared toward *spoken language interpreters* working in conference settings, 84% (n=204) of survey respondents indicated that they had not participated in such training. Regarding their participation in workshops or trainings that are specifically focused on interpreting in conference situations are geared toward *sign language interpreters*, 60% (n=205) of survey respondents indicated that they had not participated in this type of training either. All survey participants were asked if they had ever had an opportunity to observe or participate in interpreting in conference settings while in a mentoring relationship. Of the respondents to this question (n=205), 118 participants (57.56%) indicated that they had not had this type of opportunity (Figure 11).
Survey participants were then asked about their experiences with conference interpreting content in interpreter training programs. Of the 204 responses gathered, 62 participants (30.39%) attended training programs that did have education about work in conference settings, 75 participants (36.76%) attended programs that did not address work in conference settings, and 67 participants (32.84%) indicated that they did not attend formal training programs (Figure 12).
Participants who indicated that their training programs did include education about interpreting in conference settings were asked about the format of the education they received. Those participants were presented with five formats and a “not applicable” option in the case that they had experienced a format not listed, as seen in Figure 13, and asked to select all that they had experienced.
Figure 13. Format of training on conference interpreting in formal interpreter training program

Of the 63 respondents, 21 indicated that they only experienced one of the five types of instruction in their program; 42 participants indicated multiple types of instruction. The most frequently experienced type of instruction on conference interpreting was delivered via instructor anecdotes, followed by single lectures and modules within a larger course. Nine participants received instruction during non-course based workshops or lectures, and only one participant indicated that their program included a full course on conference interpreting. When asked if their training programs provided an opportunity for observation or participation in conference interpreting during their practicum and/or internship experiences, 53.97% of respondents (n=63) indicated that they did have these opportunities (see Figure 14).
Figure 14. Participation in mentoring in conference environments in formal training programs

As internship and practicum experiences entail a level of mentorship and guidance; it can be seen that number sits in contrast to the previous question asked of all participants about their mentoring experiences in conference situations.

Past processes

As previously mentioned, both survey and interviewee responses indicate that there is a difference between interpreting conferences that are by and for sign language interpreters, and conferences at which interpreters are present only as service providers for deaf attendee(s). Participants indicate that each of these types of conferences has a different mechanism of entry into the work. Non-interpreting themed conferences are often staffed and coordinated by interpreting agencies. The agency may or may not work with interpreters who are skilled and experienced in conference interpreting, and the individuals scheduling the interpreters may or may not be an interpreter or even know sign language. Additionally, a deaf attendee may
request a specific interpreter or team of interpreters from the agency coordinating services due to their relationship and/or past experiences with those practitioners. This can lead to a great deal of variability in the competencies of interpreters being used to provide services in conference environments.

Interpreting themed conferences usually have teams of interpreters that are selected through an application process and coordinated by interpreters who have been designated for that role. For several of the interview participants, their entry into conference interpreting occurred via the interpreting of RID conferences at the state, then regional, then national levels. This work lead to their being asked to do other non-interpreting related conferences, due to the reputation and relationships they developed interpreting at the interpreting themed conferences. Fiona shared her experience with this process, saying,

I got asked to interpret the State conference or the State RID conference… I did that with more experienced interpreters, so probably similarly to everybody else, I was certified by then. But it was like, I did the State conference a couple times, then I did a regional conference, then I did my first RID conference, holy shit, scary, scary. I lived. I did another RID conference, still lived. So, it was just, you know, the State conference (EXPANDING)\(^3\) and one big giant risk, I didn't die from.

Leah discussed the importance of relationships in her entry into conference interpreting, explaining, “The first time I worked an interpreting conference, it was because the people who were coordinating it… knew me and they were like, do you want to come do this thing? Send us a tape of your samples.” Phil explained the benefits of this method of entry, and described his

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\(^3\) English words presented in all capital letters represent a sign produced during the discourse, which was not vocalized (Baker-Shenk and Cokely, 1980).
beginnings as a conference interpreter, saying, “I was usually the youngest person on the team… it allowed me to get experience, it also helped me learn what worked for me, what didn’t, and how to communicate that clearly to my teams.”

The concept of mentoring was also mentioned by interview participants in their discussion of entry into the field of conference interpreting. Melvin discussed learning about his team interpreters after being hired for his first State level RID conference, saying that,

I knew just from her telling me those names, that I was going to be in good hands. And I…

couldn't have asked to be treated better. They knew I was a junior member of the team but they treated me as if I was qualified to be there.

His team supported him through his first experience, and helped to cultivate his love of interpreting in conference contexts. Though Brad’s first conference interpreting experience was not an interpreting themed conference, he also notes the importance of mentoring in his continued engagement with conference work, noting, “Deaf professionals… sort of mentored me beyond that as they kept calling me back to this.” These mentoring experiences of model conference interpreters can again be contrasted with the survey data collected about mentoring in conference environments, which show that the majority of survey respondents reported not participating in conference mentoring activities.

**Evolution**

Interview data suggests that there is a shift in the field specifically related to interpreting themed conferences. This shift is reported as occurring in two ways; the first is the increase of content being presented in sign language, and the second is the increased use of Certified Deaf Interpreters/Deaf Interpreters (CDIs/DIs) in conference environments. Fiona and Leah both
mention the current shift in the field toward having content presented directly in sign, and Fiona notes that this results in having less need for hearing interpreters in conference environments, explaining, “It's hard because it makes me sad because I really like doing that and I love that sort of chaos of the group and all that stuff. And now it’s, you know, not as much need for that.”

While working with CDIs/DIs was mentioned in only four survey respondents’ definitions of conference interpreting, four of the five interviewees discussed the growing use of CDIs in conference environments. Survey respondents noted that conference interpreting was defined by work with “a hearing or CDI team”, “working with a CDI on stage or as a CDI on stage working with a hearing interpreter that is seated below”, and that conference interpreting “can occur with or without a CDI team.” Several interview participants note the current change to using CDIs/DIs and the benefits that that shift brings, while also expressing some nostalgia for the ‘good old days’ of conference interpreting, and some amount of feeling of loss of that work. Brad commented on this duality of feeling, saying, “I was there when the shift was made to have deaf interpreters on stage… that was a little process of loss for me, but I immediately saw the benefit of doing it that way.” He also mentioned that he enjoys the challenges of working with deaf interpreters in a supporting role. In Phil’s discussion of his work with CDIs/DIs, he says “That’s becoming more and more where the profession is going, so that it’s deaf interpreters on stage, not hearing interpreters.” Fiona was very enthusiastic about both the benefits and the learning opportunities presented by what she describes as the “transition into CDI’s as the lead of the team”, she explains,

I have to learn, still, to wait and defer some of the primary decision making to the deaf interpreters, because they’ll have a much better idea of what they need from me as a team. Having deaf interpreters with us now [is] like the best thing ever.
Leah echoed some of the nostalgia of the other interview participants, and added a concern about the entry process for future generations of interpreters. She says, “I love doing interpreter conferences, and we don’t hardly get to do them anymore, but, too bad for the young people coming up”, adding that the loss of this work may impact the “the grooming of interpreters… I don’t know that younger interpreters are going to have those experiences anymore.” In any case, it seems that the evolution to use of CDIs/DIs is seen as a positive shift, and is integral to some interpreters’ definitions of conference interpreting.

Discussion

This study attempts to identify the ways in which sign language interpreters characterize conference interpreting. A mixed methods approach was used to gather both quantitative data via an online survey, and qualitative data via participant interviews. This section will address the prominent findings of the study.

The features identified by participants as being inherent in conference interpreting are a shared field of specialty, a multiplicity of session types, and an increased visibility compared to generalist work. It is likely that interpreters working between any language pair in conference settings experience the first two features; however, it is the increased visibility that sets the work sign language interpreters do apart from spoken language interpreters. Sign language interpreters’ work is often audible and/or visible to all attendees, and is sometimes performed on stage alongside the speaker in much the same way that spoken language interpreters worked during what Baigorri-Jalon (2014) describes as the “splendor of consecutive” (p.12). An additional layer to this visibility is the fact that sign language interpreters may also be able to receive direct feedback from their clients during the course of the interpretation. This increased
visibility can add pressures and demands of interpreters, in addition to the load of the work itself, and requires interpreters to possess specific skills in order to negotiate these challenges.

Participants also identify several differences in conference work in comparison to the work done in other interpreting settings. The need for skills to work in higher registers, such as formal and frozen register, is higher in conference environments. This may be correlated with the field-specific nature of conferences, as discussed above. As conference attendees often share the same special interests or vocations, there will be language and technical vocabulary specific to that field, of which interpreters may or may not be aware. The complexity of this type of language speaks to what Ure (as cited in Napier, 2003) calls its lexical density. Napier (2003) looks at lexical density in academic classrooms in her study of interpreter omissions; her findings indicate that an increase in lexical density has an impact on interpreters’ use of omissions in their work. The timing and pacing of conferences are also a defining feature of conference work, again, necessitating interpreters to possess a high level of flexibility and endurance in order to participate in conference work. Teaming processes in conference environments are also unique, requiring interpreters to be agile in their relationships with other hearing interpreters, CDIs/DIs, and other members of the communication team such as captioning providers.

A look at the process of entry into conference interpreting finds a lack of formal training for interpreters in both the academic and professional fields. One encouraging note can be found in the fact that the majority of respondents who received education about conference interpreting in their formal training programs were also able to either observe or participate in conference interpreting environments during their intern/practicum courses. While several interview participants highlight the importance of mentoring during their process of entry, their experience stands in direct contrast to the number of participants who report that they have not had the
opportunity to participate in mentoring relationships in conference environments. This, along with the shift of interpreting themed conferences being presented in sign language and the increased use of CDIs/DIs, represent an evolution in the field as it relates to interpreting themed conferences. This shift may impact the ways in which interpreters begin interpreting at conferences.

Most notable and disturbing is the fact that no CDIs/DIs were among the five interpreters identified most frequently as exemplar interpreters. Within the design on this study, this means that a CDI/DI perspective is absent from the data collected here. Additionally, CDIs/DIs were not mentioned many times in the survey question asking for a definition of conference interpreting. They were, however, mentioned in all 5 interviews, and their inclusion in conference teams was generally seen as a positive contribution bringing great benefit to conference interpreting teams.

It is also important to note that there is an additional volume of data collected during the course of this study that has not been discussed here. Themes related to coordination of conference interpreting teams, preparation done by interpreters for their work in these environments, compensation received for conference work, and compensatory strategies used by interpreters in the execution of their work were all identified. While these themes did not contribute to the characterization of conference interpreting as presented here, they are applicable to conference work, and may be explored in future publications.

Limitations

The recruitment of participants for this study went fairly smoothly, and yielded much data. While good, the method of recruitment could have been more robust and served to reach
more interpreters. In retrospect, there were other organizations to which a request for dissemination could have been sent, such as the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), or the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA), many members of which are either interpreters, or in networks with interpreters. Additionally, dissemination could have been held to coincide with the next publication of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Newsletter, instead of having the information go out solely through RID’s social media network.

Other limitations of this study include the timeline in which the research had to be proposed, approved, conducted, and written, and the lack of experience of the researcher. The deadlines associated with a graduate degree program were the overarching drivers of the timing of the study. A more experienced researcher may have chosen to focus on only one data collection method for this initial project, or to conduct the first phase in a time frame which would have allowed the data analysis from that phase to inform the second phase.

As previously discussed, no CDIs/DIs were included in the pool of interviewees, severely limiting the ability of this work to capture the characteristics of conference interpreting by all interpreters engaged in the work. Additionally, all survey and interview participants identified as living in the United States, therefore the characterizations only represent the cultural perspective of interpreters working in this country.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this exploratory study is to understand the ways in which sign language interpreters conceive of and define conference interpreting. Using mixed methods research, the views of interpreters were collected and analyzed. Findings indicate that there are features inherent in conference environments that may not be present in other environments; that there are several ways in which conference work differs from generalist work; and that there has been a change in the processes by which sign language interpreters begin interpreting in the conference setting. This research moves the field one step forward in identifying conference interpreting as a true specialty setting, much like legal, medical, and educational interpreting are considered specialty settings. Limitations to this study include the timeline in which the study had to be conducted, the lack of deaf interpreter perspective, and the lack of international perspectives on conference work by sign language interpreters in other countries.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is the development of a conference interpreting career lattice, similar to the one developed by the CAITE Center for healthcare interpreting (CATIE Center, 2016). This lattice outlines various points of entry, skills and competencies, and recommended settings for healthcare interpreters. A resource of this nature, crafted for conference interpreting, would be helpful to interpreters wanting to enter the field of conference interpreting, as well as schedulers and hiring entities making decisions about an interpreter’s fitness to begin the work.

A conference interpreting lattice would also provide an excellent guide for instructors and curriculum developers looking to add education about conference interpreting to their interpreter training programs. The reported shifts in the field toward increased use of deaf interpreters in
conference settings would necessitate training for deaf interpreters wishing to enter the field, as well as training for hearing interpreters in working with deaf interpreters. Efforts to developing this sort of curriculum should look to the Deaf Interpreter Curriculum developed by the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers for guidance and resources (NCIEC, 2016).

Survey data indicate that there is a need for increased professional development for those in the field who are already working in conference settings. Training should address not only the hard skills needed by those working in conference settings, such as the ability to function in higher registers, work from frozen text, and produce high quality interpreted products, but also to address the challenges presented by the scheduling, logistics, and pace of conference environments. Trainings should take care to address the needs of both deaf and hearing interpreters, and to consider the perspectives of deaf interpreters as both colleagues and consumers of interpreting services.

The final recommendation presented here is the creation of more standardized documentation about resources regarding the conference interpreting environment. At the time of writing, RID is in the process of addressing the need to update their Standard Practice Paper on Conference Interpreting. Development of a list of best and/or most effective practices for negotiating this unique environment would certainly be of benefit to those entering into and working in the field. Coordinators of interpreting services for conferences, both those who are employees of agencies hired to provide services to a conference, and those individuals given the task of assembling a team to interpret a meeting of a professional organization, would benefit from guidance on screening, scheduling, and supporting interpreters in conference environments. Information about rate-differentials and conference pay structures may also assist those looking to hire skilled conference interpreters to attract the most qualified applicants for the work.
Directions for Future Research

The first, and I believe most important, research that I believe should be done is an exploration into CDI/DI perspectives on conference interpreting. As previously mentioned, this study is notably missing this crucial perspective, and therefore is limited in its ability to characterize conference interpreting. Research in this area would enhance and strengthen the work all interpreters do in this area.

Additionally, research into teaching the elements of the deaf interpreter-hearing interpreter process of interpreting would be useful to support the recommendation made above that this should be taught in interpreter training programs. This research should begin by surveying the field to see what is currently being taught around this skill set, and whether or not that teaching has been successful. Best practices by and for deaf interpreter-hearing interpreter teams would also inform a curriculum of this nature.

Research on the implications of visibility on interpreter’s cognitive processing ability would benefit deaf and hearing interpreters working in conference contexts. This type of research may present the opportunity of interdisciplinary collaboration with practitioners in other fields whose work is equally visible. Identification of these implications could lead to the development of mitigating strategies, and therefore the increased success of interpreters in these environments.

Without the knowledge of deaf participants’ preferences and behaviors in conference environments, little of the research mentioned previously will be of impact to an attendee’s experience. Information about the ways in which deaf conference attendees interact and engage with and within these environments is crucial to the development of strategies for providing interpreting services in these contexts. This type of research should seek to engage deaf
conference attendees as co-investigators in order to identify what is most impactful to their experiences.

Research into interpreters’ strategies for negotiating highly field specific contexts is another area of inquiry with the potential to yield strategies for work in conference contexts. As mentioned, interview participants discussed a variety of compensatory strategies for working with technical language, indicating that there is a skill set possessed by the exemplars in the field. Identifying these skills would have implications for the teaching of conference interpreting for both students and those actively working in the field.

**Final Thoughts**

It is from a place of love of conference work, interest in bettering interpreters working in conference situations, and a deep commitment to improving the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing individuals attending conference that I began this work. I believe that this study is necessary in our field, and it is my hope that this foundational work will be a platform upon which more research into conference interpreting done by ASL-English interpreters can rest. It is also my hope that these research findings will allow interpreters to conceive of conference interpreting as a specialty, in much the same way we currently conceive of legal interpreting, medical interpreting, and interpreting in performing arts. I believe that this information will benefit the field of interpreters, interpreter schedulers, and deaf professionals, and create better conference experiences for the deaf and hard of hearing consumers using these services.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Characterizations of Conference Interpreting by ASL/English Interpreters

Q56 Thank you so much for your interest in participating in this survey about conference interpreting!

Your responses will be anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Qualtrics. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study; the benefit is to contribute to the knowledge about interpreters and the interpreting profession. Your participation is completely voluntary, and no compensation is available for your participation. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researcher, Program Director Dr. Erica Alley, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact me, Amanda David (amdavid@stkate.edu) or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Clicking the arrow button at the bottom of this screen will start the survey, and indicate your consent to participate.
Q58 These first questions will tell us a little about the people taking the survey (that’s you!).

Q50 Age

▼ 18-24 (1) ... Prefer not to answer (12)

Q51 Audiological status

- Deaf (1)
- Hard of Hearing (2)
- Hearing (3)
- Other (please specify) (4) ______________________________

Q52 Credentials held. Please check all that apply.

- NAD - III (1)
- NAD - IV (2)
- NAD - V (3)
- RID - CDI (4)
- RID - NIC (5)
- RID - NIC Advanced (6)
- RID - NIC Master (7)
- RID - CI (8)
- RID - CT (9)
- RID - CSC (10)
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☐ BEI: MSS (39)

☐ BEI: SEE (40)

☐ BEI: Medical (41)

☐ EIPA 2.0-2.4 (42)

☐ EIPA 2.5-2.9 (43)

☐ EIPA 3.0-3.4 (44)

☐ EIPA 3.5-3.9 (45)

☐ EIPA 4.0 or above (not RID Ed. K-12) (46)

☐ State QA Level (47)

Q53 Highest level of education completed:

☐ High school diploma or general education degree (1)

☐ Associate’s Degree or two year college diploma (2)

☐ Bachelor’s degree (3)
Circle the appropriate option.

Master's degree (4)
Doctoral degree (5)
Professional degree (6)
I am currently taking courses at a college or university (7)
Other (please specify) (8) ________________________________________________

Q54 Ethnicity

Asian (1)
Black or African/American (2)
Caribbean Islander (3)
Hispanic (4)
Latino/Latina/Latinx (5)
Middle eastern (6)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (7)
White or Caucasian (8)
Mixed ethnicity (9)
Prefer not to answer (10)
Other (please specify) (11) ________________________________________________

Q55 What is your current primary professional role

Staff Interpreter (1)
Free lance interpreter (2)
Interpreter educator (3)
Q56 Region

- Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia) (1)
- Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland & District of Columbia (Potomac Chapter), Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia) (2)
- Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) (3)
- Central (Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming) (4)
- Pacific (Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington) (5)
- International location (please specify) (6)

Q57 Number of years working as an interpreter:

- ▼ 1-5 (1) ... 46+ (10)

Q60 Thanks for that information.... now let's talk about conference interpreting!

Q1 Please share your definition of conference interpreting.

________________________________________________________________

Q2 Have you ever interpreted in a conference setting?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
Q3 Considering your most recent conference experience, what percentage of the time did you interpret from spoken language into a signed language?

- Percentage from spoken to signed language. (1)

Q4 Considering your most recent conference experience, what percentage of the time did you interpret from a signed language into spoken language?

- Percentage from sign to spoken language. (1)

Q45 Considering your most recent conference experience, how many d/Deaf and hard of hearing consumers did you serve?

- Number of d/Deaf and hard of hearing consumers (1)

Q6 How often do you work in conference settings?

- Once or more per month (1)
- Once or more per quarter (3 month period) (2)
- Once or more per 6 month period (3)
- Once or more per year (4)

Q7 In the last 12 months, approximately how many days did you work in conference settings?

- Approximate number of days (1)
Q8 In which of the following venues have you interpreted conferences. Please check all that apply.

- Hotel (1)
- Conference Center (2)
- Educational campus (college, university, high school, etc.) (3)
- Religious campus (temple, mosque, church, etc.) (4)
- Stadium, arena, or amphitheatre type venue (5)

Q9 Which of the following types of conferences have you interpreted. Please check all that apply.

- Medical (1)
- Legal (2)
- Academic (3)
- Interpreting (4)
- Theatre (5)
- Disability Related (6)
- Business (7)
- Religious (8)
- Motivational (9)
- Multi level marketing (10)
- Recovery (11)
- Mental Health (12)
- Other (13) ________________________________
Q10 Considering your work in conference setting, please share your experience with availability of the conference program:

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</table>

Q11 Considering your work in conference settings, which of the following program elements are usually present. Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Opening Ceremony (1)
- [ ] Keynote Speech (2)
- [ ] Closing Ceremony (3)
- [ ] Plenary Sessions (4)
- [ ] Business Meeting (5)
- [ ] Workshops/Breakout Sessions (6)
- [ ] Academic Paper Presentations (7)
- [ ] Panel discussions (8)
- [ ] Meal time interpreting (9)
- [ ] One on one meetings (10)
- [ ] Networking Sessions (11)
- Registration Desk (12)
- Exhibit Hall (13)
- Poster Sessions (14)
- Support Service Provision (15)
- Entertainment (music, performance, other) (16)
- Affinity group meetings (special interest groups, employee resource groups, member sections, etc.) (17)

Q13 Considering your work in conference settings, **how frequently** do you interpret each of these program elements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>I always interpret this (1)</th>
<th>I usually interpret this (2)</th>
<th>I sometimes interpret this (3)</th>
<th>I rarely interpret this (4)</th>
<th>I never interpret this (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Ceremony (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Speech (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing Ceremony (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plenary Sessions (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Meeting (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops/Breakout Sessions (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Paper Presentations (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel discussions (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meal time interpreting (9)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>Very qualified (1)</td>
<td>Somewhat qualified (2)</td>
<td>Not qualified (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening Ceremony (xx1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Speech (xx2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing Ceremony (xx3)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary Sessions (xx4)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Meeting (xx5)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q48 Please share your **feelings of your own qualification** for interpreting in each of these conference situations, when working from *spoken language into sign language (signing work)*:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Very qualified (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat qualified (2)</th>
<th>Not qualified (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops/Breakout Sessions (xx6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Paper Presentations (xx7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel discussions (xx8)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal time interpreting (xx9)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>One on one meetings (xx10)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Sessions (xx11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Desk (xx12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibit Hall (xx13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Sessions (xx14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Service Provision (xx15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment (music, performance, other) (xx16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity group meetings (special interest groups, employee resource groups, member sections, etc.) (xx17)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q47 Please share your feelings of your own qualification for interpreting in each of these conference situations, when working from sign language into spoken language (voicing work):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Very qualified (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat qualified (2)</th>
<th>Not qualified (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Ceremony</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>Occurrences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Speech</td>
<td>(x2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Ceremony</td>
<td>(x3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary Sessions</td>
<td>(x4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td>(x5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops/Breakout Sessions</td>
<td>(x6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Paper Presentations</td>
<td>(x7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel discussions</td>
<td>(x8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal time interpreting</td>
<td>(x9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One on one meetings</td>
<td>(x10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Sessions</td>
<td>(x11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Desk</td>
<td>(x12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibit Hall</td>
<td>(x13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster Sessions</td>
<td>(x14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Service Provision</td>
<td>(x15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment (music, performance, other)</td>
<td>(x16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity group meetings (special interest groups, employee resource groups, member)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q49 Which pieces of technology/equipment have you used during your work in conference settings? Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Microphone used for voicing work that can be heard by all session participants (1)
- [ ] Microphone used for voicing work using an FM (closed mic) system (2)
- [ ] Audio monitor speakers (3)
- [ ] Visual monitor screen displaying captioning (4)
- [ ] Visual monitor screen displaying slide presentation (other than the screen facing the audience) (5)
- [ ] Large screen projection of your work (6)
- [ ] Video remote interpreting in a conference setting (7)
- [ ] Receiver/earpiece used to receive spoken source language (8)
- [ ] Other (9) ____________________________________________________________
- [ ] I have never used any of these (10)

Q15 Which of the following types of materials have you used to prepare for your work in conference settings? Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Organization website (1)
- [ ] Access to the program book or online program (2)
- [ ] Copies of agendas (3)
- [ ] Copies of speeches (4)
- [ ] Copies of motions/resolutions (5)
☐ Abstracts or full academic papers (6)

☐ Power point presentations/Slide Decks (7)

☐ Access to the presenter before the presentation (8)

☐ Online videos of the presenter (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) (9)

☐ Discussions with interpreters who have previous experience with consumers (10)

☐ Discussions with interpreters who have previous experience with the conference content (11)

☐ Briefings from onsite coordinators (12)

☐ Conference App (13)

☐ Other (14) ________________________________________________

☐ I have never used any of these (15)

Q14 In relation to preparation materials for the work you do in conference settings, please consider the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparatory materials are sent to me by a coordinator or someone related to the conference. (1)</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Usually (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Rarely (4)</th>
<th>Never (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am not directly sent, but have access to preparatory materials. (2)</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Usually (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Rarely (4)</th>
<th>Never (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q18 When you have worked in conference settings with teams of more than two interpreters, are you generally paired with the same co-interpreter for the duration of the conference?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Sometimes (3)

Q17 Considering your experience interpreting in conference settings, please share the size(s) of teams that you have worked with. Please check all that apply.

- Team of 2 interpreters (1)
- Team of 3-9 interpreters (2)
- Team of 10-15 interpreters (3)
- Team of 16-20 interpreters (4)
- Team of greater than 20 interpreters (5)
- I have never worked in a conference setting with a team (6)

Q19 How are you generally assigned to sessions when interpreting in conference settings? Please check all that you have experienced.

- Coordinator asks session preferences and assigns (1)
- Coordinator does not ask session preferences and assigns (2)
- Interpreters choose sessions themselves while onsite (3)
- Consumer requests/chooses interpreters (4)

Q20 In your work in conference settings, how are the roles (signing, voicing, audience mirroring, etc.) assigned during conference sessions? Please check all that you have experienced.

- Coordinator asks role preferences and assigns (1)
- Coordinator does not ask role preferences and assigns (2)
- Session interpreters decide roles between themselves (3)

Q21 How often does your work in conference settings include an interpreter coordinator who is onsite?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of onsite coordinator (1)</th>
<th>Coordinator is always onsite (1)</th>
<th>Coordinator is usually onsite (2)</th>
<th>Coordinator is sometimes onsite (3)</th>
<th>Coordinator is rarely onsite (4)</th>
<th>Coordinator is never onsite (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q22 How often does your work in conference settings include partnering with spoken language interpreters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of work with spoken language interpreters (1)</th>
<th>I always work with spoken language interpreters (1)</th>
<th>I usually work with spoken language interpreters (2)</th>
<th>I sometimes work with spoken language interpreters (3)</th>
<th>I rarely work with spoken language interpreters (4)</th>
<th>I never work with spoken language interpreters (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q23 How often does your work in conference settings include partnering with captioning providers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of work with captioning providers (1)</th>
<th>I always work with captioning providers (1)</th>
<th>I usually work with captioning providers (2)</th>
<th>I sometimes work with captioning providers (3)</th>
<th>I rarely work with captioning providers (4)</th>
<th>I never work with captioning providers (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q25 Have you ever attended a workshop or training that specifically focuses on interpreting in conference situations, for **sign language interpreters**?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q26 Have you ever attended a workshop or training that specifically focuses on interpreting in conference situations, for **spoken language interpreters**?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q27 If you attended an interpreter training program, did your interpreter training program discuss interpreting in conference setting?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I did not attend an ITP (3)

Q28 You have indicated that you attended an interpreter training program which did discuss interpreting in conference settings. Which of the following formats were used when discussing conference interpreting? Please check all that apply

- Full Course on conference interpreting (1)
- Module in a course (2)
- Single lecture in a course (3)
- Instructor discussed or shared anecdotes (4)
- Non-course based workshop or lecture (5)
- None of these are applicable (6)
Q29 You have indicated that you attended an interpreter training program which did discuss interpreting in conference settings. Did you have an opportunity to observe or participate in interpreting in conference settings during your practicum and/or internship?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q30 Have you ever had an opportunity to observe or participate in interpreting in conference settings in a mentoring relationship?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q31 When doing work interpreting in conference settings, are you generally compensated at:

- A rate lower than your usual freelance rate (1)
- Your usual freelance rate (2)
- A rate higher than your usual freelance rate (3)
- I am a staff employee and interpreting conferences is part of my regular work duties (4)

Q32 Do you get paid a differential for the interpreting work you do in conference settings?

- Yes (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- No (3)

Q33 You indicated that you are paid a differential rate for the interpreting work you do in conference settings. In what range is that differential?

- $0-$5 per hour (1)
- + $6-$10 per hour (2)
Q34 Please share the following about compensation for preparation time when working in conference settings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation for preparation done before arriving onsite (1)</th>
<th>I am always compensated (1)</th>
<th>I am usually compensated (2)</th>
<th>I am sometimes compensated (3)</th>
<th>I am rarely compensated (4)</th>
<th>I am never compensated (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation for preparation done after arriving onsite (2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q37 Have you ever traveled to another city to interpret a conference?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q38 With regard to travel expenses, when doing conference work in cities where you do not live, are you generally:

- Reimbursed for flight or mileage expenses only (1)
Q39 With regard to lodging expenses, when doing conference work in cities where you do not live, are you generally:

- Provided with a hotel room without being expected to share with a roommate (1)
- Provided with a hotel room and expected to share with a roommate (2)
- Expected to make your own accommodations and reimbursed at a specific rate per night (3)
- Not provided with any lodging expenses (4)

Q40 With regard to per diem (meal) expenses, when doing conference work in cities where you do not live, are you generally:

- Given a flat per diem to cover your meals (1)
- Given a per diem to cover your meals and reimbursed for actual expenses (required to submit receipts) (2)
- Not compensated for meals (3)

Q44 Do you have any experience coordinating interpreters in conference settings?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q45 You have indicated that you have experience coordinating interpreters in conference settings. Did your coordination duties include interpreting if/when necessary?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
Q46 You have indicated that you have experience coordinating interpreters in conference settings. Please share your feelings of qualification to do the coordination work in this environment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When coordinating interpreters in conference settings, I feel: (1)</th>
<th>Very qualified (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat qualified (2)</th>
<th>Not qualified (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q42 There are often interpreters whose work we regard as exemplary in the field. Please share the name of one interpreter who you feel is a model ‘conference interpreter’.

________________________________________________________________

Q43 Thank you so much for your time and participation!

If you would like a copy of the results of this survey, please send a request email to amdavid@stkate.edu. Results are anticipated to be distributed in May 2018.

Have a fabulous day!

Amanda
Appendix B

Interview Guide

(These questions will not be asked in any specific order.)

- Tell me about the last conference you worked?
- How did you get into interpreting conferences?
- What makes this work different than other work?
- What special skills should interpreters have in doing this work?
- What made that a conference?
- How did you come to be hired for this conference?
- How did you prepare for this conference?
- Tell me about the language and mode that you used.
- Tell me about the compensation package you received.
Appendix C

Interview Demographic Questions

Q56 Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview about your experience with conference interpreting!

I would like to collect some demographic information about you. Your responses will be anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Qualtrics. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Q58 These first questions will tell us a little about the people taking the survey (that’s you!).

Q50 Age

▼ 18-24 (1) ... Prefer not to answer (12)

Q51 Audiological status

☐ Deaf (1)

☐ Hard of Hearing (2)

☐ Hearing (3)

☐ Other (please specify) (4) ____________________________________________
Q52 Credentials held. Please check all that apply.

☐ NAD - III (1)
☐ NAD - IV (2)
☐ NAD - V (3)
☐ RID - CDI (4)
☐ RID - NIC (5)
☐ RID - NIC Advanced (6)
☐ RID - NIC Master (7)
☐ RID - CI (8)
☐ RID - CT (9)
☐ RID - CSC (10)
☐ RID - IC (11)
☐ RID - TC (12)
☐ RID - SC: L (13)
☐ RID - SC: PA (14)
☐ RID - Ed. K-12 (15)
☐ RID - CLIP-R (16)
☐ RID - MCSC (17)
☐ RID - RSC (18)
☐ RID - OIC: C (19)
RID - OIC: S/V (20)
RID - OIC: V/S (21)
RID - OTC (22)
BEI - I (23)
BEI - II (24)
BEI - III (25)
BEI - IV (26)
BEI - V (27)
BEI: Level IV Intermediary (28)
BEI: Level V Intermediary (29)
BEI - Basic (30)
BEI - Advanced (31)
BEI - Master (32)
BEI - Court (33)
BEI -OC: B (34)
BEI -OC: C (35)
BEI -OC: V (36)
BEI: Trilingual (Advanced) (37)
BEI: Trilingual Master (38)
BEI: MSS (39)
☐ BEI: SEE (40)

☐ BEI: Medical (41)

☐ EIPA 2.0-2.4 (42)

☐ EIPA 2.5-2.9 (43)

☐ EIPA 3.0-3.4 (44)

☐ EIPA 3.5-3.9 (45)

☐ EIPA 4.0 or above (not RID Ed. K-12) (46)

☐ State QA Level (47)

Q53 Highest level of education completed:

☐ High school diploma or general education degree (1)

☐ Associate’s Degree or two year college diploma (2)

☐ Bachelor’s degree (3)

☐ Master’s degree (4)

☐ Doctoral degree (5)

☐ Professional degree (6)

☐ I am currently taking courses at a college or university (7)

☐ Other (please specify) (8) _____________________________
Q54 Ethnicity

- Asian (1)
- Black or African/American (2)
- Caribbean Islander (3)
- Hispanic (4)
- Latino/Latina/Latinx (5)
- Middle eastern (6)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (7)
- White or Caucasian (8)
- Mixed ethnicity (9)
- Prefer not to answer (10)
- Other (please specify) (11) ________________________________________________

Q55 What is your current **primary** professional role

- Staff Interpreter (1)
- Free lance interpreter (2)
- Interpreter educator (3)
Q56 Region

- Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia) (1)

- Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland & District of Columbia (Potomac Chapter), Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia) (2)

- Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) (3)

- Central (Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming) (4)

- Pacific (Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington) (5)

- International location (please specify) (6)

Q57 Number of years working as an interpreter:

\[
\downarrow \text{1-5 (1) ... 46+ (10)}
\]

Q59 Thanks so much!
Appendix D

Survey Recruitment Email

Greetings,

I am Amanda M. David, graduate student in the Master of Art in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program at St. Catherine University. Under the guidance of Dr. Erica Alley and Dr. Jeremy Brunson, I am exploring characterizations of conference interpreting by sign language interpreters. I am writing today to request your participation in a brief questionnaire about your experience working in conference settings.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous and cannot be traced back to you. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. Catherine University has approved the study (Protocol #936). If you have any questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk with you. You can reach me at amdavid@stkate.edu. You may also contact the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@stkate.edu.

I will collect responses until December 17, 2017. After that date, the questionnaire will be closed. Results will be disseminated through publications in professional journals and presentations given at conferences.

If you are at least 18 years of age and agree to participate, simply click on this to begin the survey: http://stkate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0DhGvphpvcMaYpT

Thank you in advance for your support and participation!

Sincerely,

Amanda M. David
BEI: III, RID CI & CT
Department of Interpretation
St. Catherine University
Appendix E

Interview Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is Amanda David and I am a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity (MAISCE) program at St. Catherine University. I am conducting research on the ways that conference interpreting is characterized by ASL-English interpreters. As part of my study, I will be interviewing interpreters to gain insight into their experiences. You are receiving this email because your name was given as someone your colleagues describe as an exemplar conference interpreter.

If you agree to participate, we will select a date and time for an interview. Our discussion will take approximately one hour, and it is possible that I may contact you at a later date with follow up questions. All information shared during this discussion will remain strictly confidential.

This study has been approved by the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (Protocol #936). You may contact the IRB office with any questions (irb@stkate.edu or 651.690.6204). My program director is Dr. Erica Alley who you may also contact (elalley@stkate.edu or 651.690.6018).

Many thanks for your consideration and I look forward to your response!

Amanda M. David, BEI:III, RID CI and CT
MAISCE student in the Department of Interpretation
St. Catherine University
Appendix F

Survey Consent

Thank you so much for your interest in participating in this survey about conference interpreting!

Your responses will be confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Qualtrics. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study; the benefit is to contribute to the knowledge about interpreters and the interpreting profession. Your participation is completely voluntary, and no compensation is available for your participation. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researcher, MAISCE Program Director Dr. Erica Alley, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project please contact me, Amanda David (am david@stkate.edu), MAISCE student and researcher, or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Clicking the arrow button at the bottom of this screen will start the survey, and indicate your consent to participate.
Appendix G

ST CATHARINE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Characterization of Conference Interpreting by American Sign Language-English Interpreters

Researcher(s): Amanda M David BEI:III, RID CI and CT

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called Characterization of Conference Interpreting by American Sign Language-English Interpreters.

The study is being done by Amanda David, a Masters’ student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Dr. Erica Alley, Program Director, at St. Catherine University. The research advisor for this study is Dr. Jeremy Brunson.

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which ASL/English interpreters characterize and define interpreting in conference settings. This study is important because there is little research done about conference interpreting and sign language interpreters. Approximately five people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You are being asked to participate in this study because your name was given as someone your colleagues describe as an exemplar conference interpreter.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- Schedule a time and date to meet with the researcher
- Sign consent forms to participate in the interview and have the conversation video recorded
- Have a conversation/interview of approximately one hour with the researcher

In total, this study will take approximately one and a half hours over one session.

What if I decide I don’t want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw until the interview is complete, after which time withdrawal will no longer be possible. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have
no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

**What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?**

There are no anticipated risks to your health or welfare; however, you will be sharing information regarding your experience interpreting in conference settings. This is considered minimal risk because the information provided can be associated with you.

Strict protocols will be in place to maintain your anonymity and the confidentiality of all information shared. Video recording will be used for this interview. If our interview occurs in person, we will identify a private location for the interview to occur. Our interview will be video recorded using a small video recorder. If we are unable to meet in person, our interview will take place via video conferencing software (e.g. Skype, FaceTime, or appear.in), and will be recorded using a small video recorder.

**What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?**

In addition to the benefit of being able to discuss your work, the overall impact of this work on the field of ASL/English interpreting in conference settings may be great. The risks of this study are minor as I and my advisors will be the only viewers of video data. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym to be used in identifying your data. You will have a choice in allowing portions of your video file to be shared for public presentations and/or inclusion in publications. You will also be able to choose whether portions of your written English transcript may be shared for public presentations and/or inclusion in written publications. These designations will be made on the Video Release Form, which we will review before the interview begins. All references to information you provide will be made using only the pseudonym you choose.

**Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?**

There is no compensation for participation.

**What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?**

The information that you provide in this study will be video recorded and transcribed. Your comments will be combined with other participants’ comments and analyzed for themes. In order to maintain confidentiality, your name will not be used in labeling or describing data; instead, the pseudonym you choose will be used in writing and analysis. Your video recording will be kept on a laptop and external hard drive in a locked cabinet in my home. Transcriptions will be password secured. Only I and my research advisors will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by May 2019. I will then destroy all original video files and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, I will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the
purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at amdavid@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Dr. Erica Alley at elalley@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be video recorded.
☐ I DO give permission for portions of my interview transcript to be used in scholarly presentations and publications. I will approve any portions that will be used (i.e. the researcher will contact me and show me the text to be used).
☐ I DO NOT give permission for portions of my interview transcript to be used in scholarly presentations and publications.

My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher.

______________________________________________________________________
Signature of Participant
Date

______________________________________________________________________
Signature of Researcher
Date