

---

# Editorial: The Real Voyage of Discovery

**Jemina Napier, Editor<sup>1</sup>**

*Macquarie University, Australia*

Many readers are familiar with metaphorical descriptions of previous definitions of the interpreter's conduit role, equating interpreters with telephones, bridges, channels of communication, and so forth (Frishberg, 1990; Solow, 1981). However, they are no longer used, as metaphorical analogies can be restrictive in considering the role of the interpreter (Roy, 1993).

The interpreting process has also been described in analogical terms by mechanistically comparing interpreting practice to machine processing, involving a process of decoding, analysis, and re-coding of language (Moser, 1978). It was later argued that this description was an over-simplistic way of examining the interpreting process, as other psycho-, socio-, extra-, and para-linguistic factors need to be taken into account, along with social, cultural, psychological, environmental, and physiological demands (Pöchhacker, 2004). Although we have "moved beyond the code model" (Turner, 2009), a mechanistic analogy may still be appropriate in representing the complex triad of an interpreter-mediated dialogue, in which the interpreter is involved in co-constructing the meaning of a message. Turner suggests that three inter-dependent cogs of an engine represent the three participants in the triad and illustrates the uptake of meaning by each interlocutor. Although the use of metaphor or analogy may be limited in its usefulness for the analysis of the interpreting role or process, these methods can still be worthy linguistic tools for the reflection and (sometimes humorous!) introspection of the translation and interpretation profession and practice. For example, Turner (2007) used analogy to metaphorically equate signed language translation and interpreting with the Wright brothers' feat of flying a plane for 12 seconds over 37 meters. In the same way that their aircraft left terra firma, Turner stated that the signed language translation and interpreting profession was being launched into a new era, with the publication of more research in the field.

I have also used metaphor in the title of a forthcoming chapter that I am writing: *If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a noise? The merits of publishing interpreting research*. If researchers are investigating aspects of interpreting, but are not publishing their findings, how can we benefit from the research?

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence to: [CITjournaleditor@gmail.com](mailto:CITjournaleditor@gmail.com)

---

## Napier

Likewise, if interpreter educators are reflecting on and evaluating their teaching, and not publishing their reflections, how can the quality of interpreter education improve?

Furthermore, in an invited oration to the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA National) conference (Napier, 2006a), I posited that there is an analogy between signed language interpreting and Star Trek, discussing how mentoring is vital to support the “next generation” of interpreters. I used a range of well known quotes from Star Trek episodes to demonstrate (a) how interpreting can be exciting, challenging, and confronting and (b) that the professional interpreting association and experienced practitioners have a role in supporting novice interpreters as they enter into (and as they stay in) the profession.

Essentially, my point is that we all have a responsibility to take newer interpreters by the hand and guide them, encourage them, mentor them. We should have faith in the next generation of interpreters; by educating them, guiding them, and mentoring them, they should be better interpreters than we are, and we should “make it so.” This message applies to translators and interpreters of all languages.

I would also like to apply the same message to translation and to interpreting educators and researchers—that is, encouraging not only newer educators and researchers but also students and practitioners (both novice and experienced) who are interested in self-reflection as an action research process. We are still learning about the processes and products involved in translation and interpreting; thus, we still need further research from all perspectives.

The paradigm of translation and interpreting is now broader and much more encompassing, incorporating discussion of spoken and signed languages in a range of different contexts, using various research methodologies. We are witnessing more dialogue and collaboration among spoken and signed language interpreter researchers, which should be further encouraged (Shaw, 2006). For example, a recent conference was coordinated by Lessius University College and the University of North Florida and was hosted in Antwerp, Belgium on “Aptitude for Interpreting,” featuring presentations from signed and spoken language interpreting researchers. Speakers from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Austria, the Czech Republic, Belgium and Italy presented information about their own research on various screening tests used with interpreting students to ascertain how linguistic, cognitive or personality factors may predict potential proficiency and success as interpreters. These presentations generated thoughtful and critical debate on research methodology, data, the use of statistics, and the applicability of findings across languages and in interpreter education.<sup>2</sup> We also observed greater collaborations among spoken and signed language interpreter educators in delivering and evaluating interpreter education across languages (Mikkelsen & Solow, 2002, 2005a, 2006b; Shaw, Grbic & Franklin, 2004). This partnership is evidenced by a new program that trains translator and interpreter educators in Australia; the program is open to educators of all languages.<sup>3</sup>

Burgeoning relationships in interpreter education are conducive to joint research projects that focus on interpreter education and training. Research into interpreting practice and interpreter education go hand in hand. Research informs education, which in turn informs practice (Napier, 2005b). Hence, the *International Journal of Interpreter*

---

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.lessius-ho.be/tt/nieuws/aptitude/Aptitude.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ling.mq.edu.au/postgraduate/coursework/tip/mtip.htm>

---

## Editorial

*Education* plays a significant role in contributing to best practices in interpreter education. If the Wright brothers could take flight again, they would surely do so in a vehicle that incorporated lessons learned from the first flight, an enhanced understanding of aeronautics in general, and consideration of the potential implications for pilot training.

Interpreter education research enables us to explore how findings from interpreting research can be incorporated into the classroom. It provides us with the opportunity to compare educational outcomes with real-world expectations. It presents us with the challenge of identifying what else we need to know about interpreting in order to improve the education of interpreters. Interpreting education research can take many forms. It is a genuine multidisciplinary, multimethod domain of research, drawing on psychological, linguistic, sociological, and educational research disciplines. Educational research comprises (a) case studies, surveys, longitudinal evaluations, and action research; (b) analyses of teaching activities, program delivery, or assessment; and (c) critiques of applications of educational theory. Consideration can be given to, and drawn from, different stakeholders: practitioners, educators, students, researchers, consumers, service providers, societal institutions (e.g., government), and the educational institutions themselves.

To use metaphor once more, I borrow from the work of Angelelli (2004) who reports that some interpreter participants involved in her study likened their role to “diamond connoisseurs,” as they picked through the information (dirt) to discover the most salient and relevant particles (diamonds). As interpreter researchers, educators, and educational researchers, we too can forage through the soil for a range of jewels (skills, attributes, experience, technologies, methodologies) to create the most stunning necklace (ideal program structure/delivery) that other designers will want to replicate.

This new journal, the *International Journal of Interpreter Education (IJIE)*, brings together spoken and signed language interpreter researchers and educators to discuss research, literature, and more important, ideas. The journal is a locus of debate where we can share our jewels and work together to design the perfect necklace. I encourage anyone teaching interpreters to consider submitting an article to the journal, whether it is based on empirical research, reflection or observation.

This particular issue comprises articles by signed language interpreting contributors, primarily influenced by the fact that the journal is published by the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT), which has its roots in the delivery of American Sign Language/English Interpreting education. The topics discussed are broad ranging, and the editorial board consists of skilled interpreter educators and researchers who represent many different languages and communities. This first issue demonstrates the commitment of CIT, the board, and the editor to make *IJIE* all-inclusive for spoken and signed language interpreter educators alike. We encourage the sharing of research, ideas, and knowledge, in order to explore new dimensions in interpreter education and to launch the *IJIE* on a new journey of discovery!

This editorial provides me with the opportunity to establish a convention regarding the writing style of the journal. Many readers will be familiar with the fact that in deaf/signed language linguistics and interpreting literature the “D/d” convention is used to distinguish between members who use the signed language of a linguistic and cultural

---

## Napier

minority community (Deaf) and those who have a hearing loss but do not use sign language or identify themselves with this linguistic minority (deaf).<sup>4</sup> In developing a policy for this journal, I have decided not to adhere to this convention. Given the evolving nature of the deaf community due to medical advancements and changes in educational policy,<sup>5</sup> greater numbers of deaf people come to the community as late learners of signed language. Thus, definitions of deaf community membership are changing. In order to be inclusive rather than exclusive, the focus of this journal will be on the languages used and interpreting as social practice with empowered and disempowered communities in both conference and community contexts. No judgment is made about the hearing and linguistic identity or status of people who use a signed language. If articles are submitted that refer to deaf people or the deaf community, all references to deafness will be edited so as not to distinguish between Deaf/deaf.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the CIT journal committee in laying the groundwork for the establishment of this journal and for bringing me on board as editor. These people include Annette Miner (CIT Board Liaison), Suzanne Ehrlich-Martin and Len Roberson (Co-Chairs), Kimberly Hale, Brenda Nicodemus, and Sherry Shaw. I would like to recognize the hard work of Annette Miner, the CIT Director of Research and Publications, in organizing the logistics of the journal publication and for her liaison between myself and the CIT board. Doug Bowen-Bailey deserves special thanks for his support in working on the *IJIE* homepage and developing the online version of the journal, including library subscriptions.

This is the inaugural volume of *IJIE*, and we welcome feedback from our readers as to the style, content, and scope of the journal. Future plans for the journal include publication on an annual (rather than biennial) basis, and a section dedicated to the emerging research of new interpreter educator scholars. As demand increases, we hope to publish more often, with special volume themes. There is now a rolling call for manuscripts, so please consider submitting an article and assisting us on the journey of discovery regarding interpreter education.

Revisiting the Star Trek theme and their voyage of discovery. . . . What is our final frontier? We should boldly go and disseminate, discuss, and dissect interpreter education and research. There are always new ways of looking at things. This relatively new field of research requires us to open our eyes and really look at what we are doing. So I would like to end with a quote from Marcel Proust (1871\_1922), which I feel sums up this new journey:

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”

---

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Bauman (2007); Johnston and Schembri (2007); Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan (1996); Senghas and Monaghan (2002); Stewart, Schein and Cartwright (1998); Sutton-Spence and Woll (1998).

<sup>5</sup> See articles Johnston (2006) and respondents in a special edition of *Sign Language Studies*

---

## Editorial

## References

- Angelelli, C. (2004). Revisiting the interpreter's role: A study of conference, court, and medical interpreters in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bauman, D. H-L. (Ed.), (2007). *Open your eyes: Deaf studies talking*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Frishberg, N. (1990). *Interpreting: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.
- Johnston, T. (2006). W(h)ither the Deaf community? Population, genetics and the future of Auslan (Australian Sign Language). *Sign Language Studies*, 6(2), 137\_173.
- Johnston, T., & Schembri, A. (2007). *Australian Sign Language (Auslan): An introduction to sign linguistics*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Lane, H., Hoffmeister, R., & Bahan, B. (1996). *A journey into the DEAF-WORLD*. San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press.
- Mikkelson, H., & Solow, S. N. (2002). *Report from the front-lines: Multilingual training-of-trainers for refugee interpreters*. Paper presented at the New Designs in Interpreter Education: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Convention of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers, Minneapolis St Paul, MN.
- Moser, B. (1978). Simultaneous interpretation: A hypothetical model and its practical application. In H. W. S. D. Gerver (Ed.), *Language interpretation and communication* (pp. 353\_368). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Napier, J. (2005a). Training sign language interpreters in Australia: An innovative approach. *Babel*, 51, 117.
- Napier, J. (2005b). Linguistic features and strategies of interpreting: From research to education to practice. In M. Marschark, R. Peterson & E. Winston (Eds.), *Sign language interpreting and interpreter education: Directions for research and practice* (pp. 84\_111). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Napier, J. (2006a, August). *Mentoring: Exploring perceptions and possibilities*. Keynote J. W. Flynn Oration presented to the Conference of the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association, Perth, Western Australia.
- Napier, J. (2006b). Educating interpreters in Australia: A blended approach. In C. B. Roy (Ed.), *New approaches in teaching interpreters*, p. 67-103. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Pöchhacker, F. (2004). *Introducing interpreting studies*. London: Routledge.
- Roy, C. B. (1993). The problem with definitions, descriptions, and the role metaphors of interpreters. *Journal of Interpretation*, 6, 127\_154.
- Senghas, R. J., & Monaghan, L. (2002). Signs of their times: Deaf communities and the culture of language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 69\_97.
- Shaw, S. (2006). Launching international collaboration for interpretation research. *Sign Language Studies*, 6(4), 438-453.
- Shaw, S., Grbic, N., & Franklin, K. (2004). Applying language skills to interpretation. *Interpreting*, 6(1), 69\_100.
- Solow, S. N. (1981). *Sign language interpreting: A basic resource book*. Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.
- Stewart, D., Schein, J., & Cartwright, B. E. (1998). *Sign language interpreting: Exploring its art and science*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sutton-Spence, R., & Woll, B. (1998). *The linguistics of British Sign Language*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Turner, G. H. (2007). 37 Metres in 12 Seconds: Sign language translation and interpreting leave “terra firma.” *The Sign Language Translator and Interpreter*, 1(1), 1\_14.
- Turner, G. H. (2009, July). Navigating our way out of conflict: Exploring the pragmatics of dialogue interpreting between speech and sign. Paper presented on behalf of G.H. Turner, K. Pollitt, G. Quinn, B. Davies, & A.

---

## Napier

Merrison at Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context: Third Conference of the International Association of Translation and Interpreting Studies, Melbourne, Australia.