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A Preliminary Study on Interpreting for Emergent Signers

Abstract

Sign language interpreters work with a variety of consumer populations throughout their careers. One such population, referred to as *emergent signers*, consists of consumers who are in the process of learning American Sign Language, and who rely on interpreters during their language acquisition period. A gap in the research is revealed when considering the interaction between this growing population and the interpreting field. The present study thus attempts to provide a preliminary examination of the topic by reporting on the findings of a survey conducted with interpreters affiliated with Gallaudet Interpreting Service at Gallaudet University. Results show that interpreters are working on a regular basis with this population that the work is different from traditional interpreting work with fluent signers, and that interpreters have differing opinions on how the work should be approached. Implications for future areas of study and the overwhelming need for research on this subject are also discussed.

THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS, sign language interpreters work with a variety of consumer populations. One is *emergent signers*, here defined as Deaf and hard of hearing individuals who are in the process of learning American Sign Language (ASL) and who utilize interpreting services while acquiring proficiency in ASL. In the United States, the number of emergent signers may be expanding due to legislative mandates that have taken Deaf students out of the culturally and linguistically rich environment of the residential schools

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and placed them in mainstream classrooms (Cokely 2005), a phenomenon that has been referred to as Deaf diaspora (Ayres 2005). In 1979, 70 percent of all Deaf and hard of hearing students were reported as having attended specialized schools for Deaf people (Allen 1994). By 1994, only 28 percent of Deaf and hard of hearing students were reported as having attended specialized schools, while the remaining 82 percent of students attended local education programs (*ibid.*). In 2009 and 2010 approximately 50 percent of Deaf and hard of hearing students in the United States were reported to be attending class in spoken-language-only environments, while approximately 30 percent were being educated in signed-language-only environments (Gallaudet Research Institute 2011).

Due to this shift from residential to mainstream-based education, many Deaf and hard of hearing students are no longer gaining early exposure to the linguistic and cultural values that they have historically encountered and learned at schools for Deaf people (Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan 1996). As a result, a phenomenon occurs when Deaf and hard of hearing individuals at some point enter the Deaf community and begin to acquire ASL. It is of particular interest in the field of sign language interpretation when considering the language acquisition process of emergent signers as it occurs in tandem with the use of ASL-English interpreting services. This article examines the impact of the enculturation process of emergent signers on the work and role of sign language interpreters.

Background

Little research has to date been conducted on this topic, yet the current literature provides insights that can support the growing need to understand this new population of emergent signers. In related literature on the implications of limited linguistic abilities, Sutton-Spence (2010) describes the importance of sign language narratives in helping Deaf people who are joining the Deaf culture as adults to develop their identities. Another study reports on the experiences of young D/deaf¹ people in the UK who are in an “in-betweenity” (Skelton and Valentine 2003, 454) stage of cultural and linguistic identity development. That study found that, in negotiating a transition from a pathological identity of hearing loss to a cultural identity of being

Deaf, young deaf people found the acquisition of a visual language (in this case British Sign Language) to be a crucial element.

Gallaudet University, the world's only liberal arts university in which all programs are designed to accommodate Deaf and hard of hearing students, has put forth a concerted effort to recruit and educate students coming from mainstream educational settings, including those who were raised primarily using spoken language. The Gallaudet University Admissions Office specifically states that the recruitment of students from mainstream high schools is part of its mission (Gallaudet University Admissions 2011). Additionally, during the summer Gallaudet University offers an ASL program, "JumpStart: ASL," for incoming students who do not have a foundation in ASL: "In time, it is expected that the 'JumpStart: ASL' students will be able to integrate into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the university" (Gallaudet University JumpStart 2012).

Until the incoming students are able to fully integrate into the community, they are supported in their educational and social activities by sign language interpreters provided by the Gallaudet Interpreting Service (GIS) (Gallaudet University 2011). This department offers "communication access services to students, faculty, and staff . . . at Gallaudet, the Clerc Center, and the Consortium Universities . . . GIS specializes in providing interpreting services and captioning services" (ibid., 131). From the fall semester of 2009 to the fall semester of 2011, GIS saw an increase in requests for both ASL-English interpreting and captioning services (ibid.).

This type of interpreting work differs from what most hearing interpreters are trained and expected to do in their careers. Sign language interpreting is generally defined as allowing communication access to occur between signing Deaf individuals and nonsigning hearing individuals (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf 2014), and there are many texts available to educate interpreters on how to work between Deaf and hearing people and their respective communities (Humphrey and Alcorn 2007; Janzen 2005; Roy 2000). However, in this setting, interpreters are providing communication access between signing Deaf individuals and nonsigning deaf and hard of hearing individuals. They are working in environments where the primary language is ASL and are interpreting into English for deaf and hard of

hearing students who are not yet fluent in ASL. Depending on each emergent signer's level of hearing, interpreters sometimes also work with a remote CART (communication access real-time translation) writer to provide captions for the interpretation.

Even though this study focuses on the experiences of interpreters affiliated with GIS, it appears that the phenomenon of emergent signers entering the Deaf community, and the impact this has on the interpreting profession, is not an experience unique to Gallaudet University. The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), one of nine colleges at the Rochester Institute of Technology, located in Rochester, New York, provides Deaf and hard of hearing students with outstanding state-of-the-art technical and professional education programs (National Technical Institute for the Deaf 2013). In 2012 NTID initiated an innovative course, called the New Signers Program, to address the needs of incoming Deaf and hard of hearing students who are not proficient in American Sign Language (National Technical Institute for the Deaf 2012). The New Signers Program is a one-week, one-credit course offered before the start of the fall semester to introduce students to American Sign Language and Deaf culture. Additionally, the Rochester Institute of Technology offers Deaf and hard of hearing students various access services, including sign language interpreting, C-Print, and note taking. C-Print, a computer-assisted captioning service developed at NTID, provides real-time captioning for students who benefit more from text-based access than from sign language interpreting. Demand for the service has increased (National Technical Institute for the Deaf 2013).

The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, a birth through twelfth-grade school for Deaf and hard of hearing children housed on the campus of Gallaudet University, runs its Emerging Signers Program, which is a “multi-dimensional support system to insure [*sic*] [the] academic success and linguistic development” (2012, 1) of students who arrive with little to no knowledge of American Sign Language. The program, which was established to meet the needs of students who transfer from public schools without a foundation in ASL, includes classroom interpreting (primarily ASL to spoken English with voice), direct ASL instruction, and counseling services to support the students' transition to the school (*ibid.*).

The changes within Deaf education and the language backgrounds of Deaf people, as well as interpreters' apparently increased interaction with this newly identified population led to this study. Here, as mentioned earlier, we report the results of a survey of interpreters affiliated with the Gallaudet Interpreting Service at Gallaudet University. Results indicate that interpreters are interacting on a regular basis with this population and that the work is different from interpreting for fluent signers. Furthermore, these interpreters believe they lack the necessary training to serve this population effectively.

Methods

The study began with a pool of 215 interpreters, all of whom were in some way affiliated with the Gallaudet Interpreting Service at the time of the survey. GIS employs full- and part-time staff interpreters, as well as freelance and contract interpreters (Gallaudet Interpreting Service 2012). The GIS administrators provided contact information for all staff members, as well as contract and freelance interpreters listed as active in its scheduling database. Potential participants were solicited for involvement via email.

Data for this study were gathered by means of a questionnaire (see appendix A) from SurveyMonkey, an online survey website. The instrument comprised fifty-three possible questions, which were presented in varying order to participants based on their responses. A member check was performed with two professional interpreters who were not part of the sample population piloting the survey before it was distributed to the potential participants.

The survey consisted of five sections: (1) background information, (2) experience with emergent signers, (3) experience, perspectives, and decision making, (4) training needs, and (5) wrap-up. Questions were presented in a variety of forms, including multiple choice, short answer, and long answer. All responses were completely anonymous, and participants were shown an informed consent document at the beginning of the survey. There was little to no risk posed to the participants of this study.

Of the 215 interpreters contacted for the survey, 73 responded, a 34 percent response rate. Analysis began with basic demographic and background information of the sample population. Of the 73

TABLE 1. Participants' Basic Demographic Information

| | Percentage | Total Number |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|
| hearing interpreters | 90.4% | 66 |
| deaf interpreters | 10.9% | 8 |
| female interpreters | 80.8% | 59 |
| male interpreters | 19.1% | 14 |

respondents, the majority were hearing females. The participant demographics are reported in table 1.

Years of professional interpreting experience ranged from one year or less, to more than twenty years, and 52 percent reported having eleven or more years of experience, as illustrated in table 2.

Table 3 shows that 90 percent of the participants held at least a bachelor's degree, and 59 percent reported having a degree in interpreting or interpreting studies.

Responses for the number of years the respondents had held national certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf ranged from not certified (three respondents) to more than twenty years (fifteen respondents), as shown in table 4.

Table 5 describes the participants' affiliation with GIS.

Results

The first research question addresses the very basic query of whether these interpreters work with emergent signers, and if so, how frequently and in what settings they do so. When asked about their

TABLE 2. Participants' Years of Professional Interpreting Experience

| Years of Experience | Percentage | Total Number |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 year or less | 1.4% | 1 |
| 1–3 years | 5.5% | 4 |
| 4–7 years | 24.7% | 18 |
| 8–10 years | 16.4% | 12 |
| 11–20 years | 23.3% | 17 |
| 20 years or more | 28.8% | 21 |

TABLE 3. Participants' Highest Completed Level of Education

| Level of Education | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| less than a high school degree | 0% | 0 |
| high school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED) | 1.4% | 1 |
| some college but no degree | 8.2% | 6 |
| associate degree | 2.7% | 2 |
| bachelor's degree | 32.9% | 24 |
| master's degree | 49.3% | 36 |
| doctorate | 5.5% | 4 |

TABLE 4. Participants' Number of Years Holding National Certification

| Years Certified | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 year or less | 2.7% | 2 |
| 1–3 years | 19.2% | 14 |
| 4–7 years | 24.7% | 18 |
| 8–10 years | 12.3% | 9 |
| 11–20 years | 16.4% | 12 |
| 20 years or more | 20.5% | 15 |
| not certified | 4.1% | 3 |

TABLE 5. Participants' Affiliation with Gallaudet Interpreting Service

| Affiliation | Percentage | Total Number |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| freelance | 58.9% | 43 |
| staff (part- or full-time) | 32.8% | 24 |
| contract | 9.5% | 7 |
| not affiliated | 2.7% | 2 |

TABLE 6. Participants' Frequency of Work with Emergent Signers

| Frequency | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------|
| frequently | 37.5% | 27 |
| occasionally | 43.0% | 31 |
| rarely | 19.4% | 14 |
| never | 0% | 0 |

work experience with emergent signers, seventy-two respondents indicated that, at some point in their careers, they had worked with an emergent signer. The rate of frequency with which these respondents work with this population was reported as 19 percent rarely, 43 percent occasionally, and 38 percent frequently working, as shown in table 6.

The respondents reported working with emergent signers in a variety of settings: K–12, postsecondary education, internships/externships, business/vocational, government, and medical, mental health, and legal environments. The most frequent contexts were in education (table 7).

The second research query was addressed by using four components to analyze differences between working with emergent signers and working with fluent signers. The first component explored the

TABLE 7. Types of Interpreting Settings with Emergent Signers

| Setting | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| educational (postsecondary) | 79.1% | 57 |
| educational (K–12) | 69.4% | 50 |
| business/vocational | 27.7% | 20 |
| internships/externships | 26.3% | 19 |
| government | 20.8% | 15 |
| medical | 20.8% | 15 |
| mental health | 16.6% | 12 |
| legal | 11.1% | 8 |
| other | 6.9% | 5 |

TABLE 8. Participants' Perception of the Comparative Difficulty of Working with Emergent Signers and Fluent Signers

| Level of Difficulty | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| less difficult | 1.5% | 1 |
| about the same | 27.9% | 19 |
| more difficult | 70.6% | 48 |

differences between working with emergent signers and fluent signers. The majority of participants who responded, a total of sixty-eight, reported that working with emergent signers was more difficult than working with fluent signers (table 8).

When asked to explain their opinion, participants mentioned feeling uncertain of their role as the interpreter and unsure of their consumers' needs, and they recognized a need for more vigilance and flexibility in the interpretation process. One participant stated, "When working with emergent signers, you have to gauge how much language they have and make assumptions about what they may catch on their own. I believe your role changes slightly as well." Another participant said, "It requires the interpreter to constantly monitor for comprehension, even more than usual," and another explained, "Emerging signers are so diverse in their transition to becoming independent signers that it requires more inquiry, more patience, more willingness to work with the client."

Next, respondents were asked to rate their relative level of comfort when working with emergent signers and fluent signers. Of the 68 responses, the majority indicated that they are less comfortable working with emergent signers than fluent signers (table 9).

TABLE 9. Participants' Perception of Their Comparative Level of Comfort When Working with Emergent Signers and Fluent Signers

| Comfort Level | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| more comfortable | 4.4% | 3 |
| about the same | 41.2% | 28 |
| less comfortable | 54.4% | 37 |

To explain these perceptions, one participant said, “[These are] uncharted waters sometimes. [I] never really have solid boundaries”; another participant stated, “There is less clarity about the goals of the interpreting task. How much should be ‘cleaned up’ or not? When? Why?” Another said, “I don’t feel like I have all the skills I need.” Participants who felt equally or more comfortable working with emergent signers shared their observations as well. One said, “Interpreting is always a challenge and I’m comfortable with challenges. I view them as I would any other clients and try my best to make sure their communication needs are met.” Another explained, “I have been trained in this area more extensively than in any other area of interpreting. Therefore, I know my role and what is expected of me.”

Participants were also asked to consider the linguistic choices they have made while interpreting for emergent signers and whether they differ from those made while working with fluent signers. Again, five respondents did not answer this question, but of the sixty-eight responses received, sixty (88 percent) indicated that their linguistic choices change when working with an emergent signer, while eight (12 percent) indicated that their linguistic choices are the same for both emergent and fluent signers. The sixty respondents who stated that they made different linguistic choices when working with emergent signers were then asked to specify which linguistic features were different (see table 10). The two features identified as being most affected by working with emergent signers were word or sign choices

TABLE 10. Different Linguistic Choices Participants Make When Working with Emergent Signers and Fluent Signers

| Linguistic Choices | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| word/sign choices | 93.3% | 56 |
| speed/pace | 83.3% | 50 |
| mouthings | 71.6% | 43 |
| prosody | 61.6% | 37 |
| nonmanual grammar | 56.6% | 34 |
| syntactic structure | 55.0% | 33 |
| register | 38.3% | 23 |
| other | 15.0% | 9 |

(93 percent) and speed or pace of interpretation (83 percent). Mouthing (71 percent) and prosody (61 percent) were also reported as being different in an interpretation for an emergent signer.

The fourth component addressed logistical changes in the environment when working with emergent and fluent signers. Of the sixty-eight responses, forty-eight (70 percent) indicated that the logistics of the environment were different when working with emergent signers, and twenty (30 percent) indicated no difference between working with emergent and fluent signers. The forty-eight respondents who stated that the logistics were affected by working with emergent signers were then asked to specify the elements that were different (see table 11). Rated as the most influenced by working with emergent signers was the placement of the interpreter (89 percent), followed by the volume of the interpretation (75 percent). Placement of the consumer (68 percent) and the use of technology (60 percent) were also identified by more than half the participants as being affected when working with this group.

The final research question addressed the issue of perceived training implementations needed for interpreters who are working with emergent signers. First, respondents were asked whether they had had any training specific to working with this population; 43 (60 percent) reported having no training, while 29 (40 percent) reported

TABLE 11. Differences in Logistic Elements When Working with Emergent Signers

| Logistic Elements | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| placement of the interpreter(s) | 89.5% | 43 |
| volume of the interpretation | 75.0% | 36 |
| placement of the consumer(s) | 68.7% | 33 |
| use of technology | 60.4% | 29 |
| use of written communication | 39.5% | 19 |
| use of props | 29.1% | 14 |
| other | 10.4% | 5 |

TABLE 12. Specialized Training in Working with Emergent Signers

| Received Training | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| yes | 60% | 43 |
| no | 40% | 29 |

having received training in the form of workshops, school courses, or mentoring (see table 12). An inquiry as to the desired need for training revealed that, of the 43 respondents who had never received specialized training, 39 (91 percent) showed interest in attending such training, while 4 (9 percent) indicated that they would not be interested (see table 13). Of the 29 respondents who had previously received training in this area, 26 (90 percent) indicated an interest in attending further training on interpreting for emergent signers, while 3 (10 percent) indicated that they would not be interested in further training (see table 14). As a tie-in to the training questions, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt prepared to work with emergent signers. Of the 72 responses, 14 (19 percent) indicated feeling very prepared to work with this population, while 50 (70 percent) reported feeling only somewhat prepared, and 8 (11 percent) felt unprepared (see table 15).

Discussion

The results indicate that ASL-English interpreters are working with emergent signers frequently and in a variety of settings. Additionally, they suggest that interpreters find that this work differs from working with fluent signers in both logistics and language, as well as in the interpreters’ own intrapersonal response to the work. Overall, interpreters reported feeling less comfortable when working with emergent signers and, on the whole, did not feel adequately prepared for this type of interpreting. The majority of interpreters polled here

TABLE 13. Interest in Receiving Specialized Training in Working with Emergent Signers

| Interested in Training | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| yes | 91% | 39 |
| no | 9% | 4 |

TABLE 14. Interest in Receiving Further Specialized Training

| Interested in Further Training | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| yes | 90% | 26 |
| no | 10% | 3 |

have not received training for working with emergent signers, though they show a clear interest in receiving such training.

Given that interpreters are doing this work frequently, are generally less comfortable with and more challenged by this work, and are very interested in receiving relevant training, the conclusion can be drawn that training in working with emergent signers should be developed. “Since the formal education of interpreters began, educators have been trying to determine what to teach in order to produce entry-level interpreters who achieve the minimum level of competence to perform their jobs successfully” (Roy 2000, 1).

We suggest that continued study in the area of emergent signers and the eventual development and inclusion of best practices into interpreter education programs would help to ensure that graduates of these programs are prepared to work with this growing population of consumers. Training could also be developed for and offered to working interpreters in the form of workshops, which provide continuing education units for certification maintenance (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf 2012).

Limitations of this study include the fact that the research was conducted with a very small and specific population of interpreters. All of the participants were in some way affiliated with GIS, which has a high incidence of work with emergent signers (Gallaudet University 2011), so the frequency and prevalence of this work cannot be assumed to represent the interpreting field on a national level. Additionally,

TABLE 15. Participants’ Perception of Their Preparedness for Working with Emergent Signers

| Level of Preparedness | Response Percentage | Response Count |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| very prepared | 19% | 14 |
| somewhat prepared | 70% | 50 |
| unprepared | 11% | 8 |

Gallaudet University is a unique and challenging location for working interpreters, with stringent hiring and screening policies (Gallaudet Interpreting Service 2012), which leads to a pool of participants who are highly educated, certified, and experienced. Again, this population cannot be assumed to represent the interpreting field as a whole.

Conclusion

This study provides a preliminary examination of topics related to interpretation and its interaction with the growing population of emergent signers. Avenues for future research include replicating this study on a national level; investigating the incidence of emergent signers in various Deaf education programs around the country; studying emergent signers' perspectives on working with interpreters; defining different consumer groups of emergent signers; identifying the specific needs of each defined consumer group; developing training techniques for interpreters working with emergent signers; and conducting a longitudinal study of emergent signers' interpreting needs as they progress through language acquisition stages.

Notes

1. An apt orthographic representation of the state of “in-betweenity” is the use of “Deaf” to signify identification with the cultural experience of being Deaf and “deaf” to refer to the pathological definition of hearing loss.

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Appendix A

Participant Survey

Background Information

1. Which category below includes your age?
 - a. 17 or younger
 - b. 18–20
 - c. 21–29
 - d. 30–39
 - e. 40–49
 - f. 50–59
 - g. 60 or older
2. What is your gender? _____
3. Do you work as a:
 - a. Deaf interpreter
 - b. Hearing interpreter
 - c. Other _____
4. How many years have you been working as a professional interpreter?
 - a. 1 year or less
 - b. 1–3 years
 - c. 4–7 years
 - d. 8–10 years
 - e. 11–20 years
 - f. 20 years or more
5. What RID certifications do you hold? (Choose all that apply.)
 - a. Noncertified
 - b. Candidate for Certification
 - c. CDI
 - d. CI
 - e. CT
 - f. NIC
 - g. NIC Advanced

- h. NIC Master
 - i. CSC
 - j. CLIP-R
 - k. SC:L
 - l. Other _____
6. How long have you been RID certified?
- a. 1 year or less
 - b. 1–3 years
 - c. 4–7 years
 - d. 8–10 years
 - e. 11–20 years
 - f. 20 years or more
 - g. I am not certified
7. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
- a. Less than a high school diploma
 - b. High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 - c. Some college but no degree
 - d. Associate degree
 - e. Bachelor's degree
 - f. Master's degree
 - g. Doctorate
8. Do you have a degree in interpreting or interpreting studies?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
- If yes, what degree did you earn and at what institution?
-
9. What is your affiliation with GIS?
- a. Full-time staff interpreter
 - b. Part-time staff interpreter
 - c. Contract interpreter
 - d. Freelance interpreter
 - e. Not affiliated
 - f. Other _____

Experience with Emergent Signers

For this study, an emergent signer is a person—deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing and of any age—who is learning ASL (actively or passively) and uses interpretation to support the language acquisition period. Other terms for this individual may include new signer, emerging signer, and second language learner of ASL.

10. Have you ever interpreted for an emergent signer?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

11. How often do you interpret for emergent signers?
 - a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Occasionally
 - d. Frequently

12. How many years have you interpreted for emergent signers?
 - a. 1 year or less
 - b. 1–3 years
 - c. 4–7 years
 - d. 8–10 years
 - e. 11–20 years
 - f. More than 20 years

13. Where have you interpreted for emergent signers? (Select all that apply.)
 - a. Gallaudet University
 - b. Clerc Center (MSSD/Kendall)
 - c. In another educational setting
 - d. In the community
 - e. Other _____

14. Most frequently at which location? _____

15. In what environments have you interpreted for emergent signers? (Select all that apply.)
 - a. Educational (K–12)
 - b. Educational (postsecondary)
 - c. Internships/externships
 - d. Business/vocational

- e. Government
 - f. Medical
 - g. Mental health
 - h. Legal
 - i. Other _____
16. Most frequently in which environment? _____
17. What age group of emergent signers have you interpreted for?
(Select all that apply.)
- a. Children
 - b. Adolescents
 - c. Young adults
 - d. Adults
 - e. Senior citizens
18. Which age group most frequently? _____
19. Have you ever received training for interpreting for emergent signers?
- a. No, I have not received training in this type of interpreting.
 - b. Yes, I have received training in a workshop.
 - c. Yes, I have received more extensive training (e.g., college class, adult learning center)
 - d. Yes, other _____
20. Where did you receive your training?
- a. GIS-sponsored event
 - b. Gallaudet University department/program (not GIS)
 - c. Elsewhere in the DC metro area
Where? _____
 - e. Outside of the DC metro area
Where? _____
21. Would you be interested in attending training on this topic?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
22. Would you be interested in further training?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not applicable

23. How prepared do you feel to interpret for emergent signers?
 - a. Very prepared
 - b. Somewhat prepared
 - c. Not prepared

Experience, Perspectives, and Decision Making

24. In comparison with your work with fluent signers, do you find interpreting for emergent signers to be:
 - a. Easier
 - b. About the same
 - c. More difficult
25. Explain your answer. _____
26. In comparison with interpreting for fluent signers, how comfortable do you feel when interpreting for emergent signers?
 - a. More comfortable
 - b. About the same
 - c. Less comfortable
27. Explain your answer. _____
28. When interpreting for *fluent* signers, what is your more frequent language direction?
 - a. ASL into spoken English
 - b. Spoken English into ASL
 - c. ASL into ASL
 - d. ASL into contact signing
 - e. Contact signing into ASL
 - f. Other (please specify) _____
29. When interpreting for *emergent* signers, what is your more frequent language direction?
 - a. ASL into spoken English
 - b. Spoken English into ASL
 - c. ASL into ASL
 - d. ASL into contact signing
 - e. Contact signing into ASL
 - f. Other (please specify) _____

30. When working with emergent signers, do you find yourself making linguistic choices that are different from those you make when working with fluent signers?
- Yes
 - No
31. Which of the following linguistic areas are affected by interpreting for emergent signers?
- Word/sign choices
 - Register
 - Prosody
 - Syntactic structure
 - Speed/pace
 - Mouthing
 - Nonmanual grammar
 - Other _____
32. When interpreting for emergent signers, do you find the logistics of the environment to be different from those when interpreting for fluent signers?
- Yes
 - No
33. Which of the following logistical areas are affected by interpreting for an emergent signer? (Select all that apply.)
- Placement of the interpreter(s)
 - Placement of the consumer(s)
 - Volume of the interpretation
 - Use of technology (real-time captioning, FM systems, microphone amplification, etc.)
 - Other _____
34. When you are interpreting for emergent signers, how and how often do you communicate with them about their needs for the interpretation? _____

35. What, if any, difference do you see between the needs of emergent signers and those of fluent signers? _____

36. When working with emergent signers on an ongoing basis, what, if any, changes do you see in their needs during the time you work with them? _____
37. When you are interpreting for emergent signers, how do you monitor the effectiveness of your interpretation? _____
38. What, if any, difference do you see between your role with emergent signers and that with fluent signers? _____

39. What, if any, difference do you see between your boundaries with emergent signers and those with fluent signers? _____

40. What, if any, difference do you see between your ethical decisions with emergent signers and those with fluent signers? _____

41. When interpreting for emergent signers, are there times when the emergent signers choose to communicate on their own without relying on the interpreter?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
42. How do you know when the emergent signers want to communicate on their own without an interpreter, and how do you monitor their need for communication support? _____

43. Do you feel prepared and competent to make decisions about role, boundaries, and ethics when working with emergent signers?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
44. Explain your answer. _____

45. Do you feel prepared and competent to communicate with your consumers about their communication needs, as well as to monitor and adjust to those needs if they change?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

46. Explain your answer. _____

47. Do you feel that you receive the same institutional/systemic support for your work with emergent signers as you receive when working with fluent signers?
- a. I receive the same level of support for my work with both emergent and fluent signers.
 - b. I receive more support for my work with emergent signers.
 - c. I receive more support for my work with fluent signers.

48. Explain your answer. _____

49. Compare your level of enjoyment when interpreting for emergent signers and fluent signers.
- a. I find it more enjoyable to interpret for emergent signers.
 - b. My enjoyment is the same for both groups.
 - c. I find it more enjoyable to interpret for fluent signers.

50. Please explain your answer. _____

Wrap-Up

51. Do you feel that interpreting for emergent signers needs more evidence-based research?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

52. Please explain your answer. _____

53. Please add any further thoughts about interpreting for emergent signers.

