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**A Look at How We Discuss the Work: Observations of Feedback in the Interpreting
Classroom**

By

Chevon N. Ramey

A thesis submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

November 2021



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

Thesis

Professional Project

Titled:

A Look at How We Discuss the Work:
Observations of Feedback in the Interpreting Classroom

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Candidate for the degree of: Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
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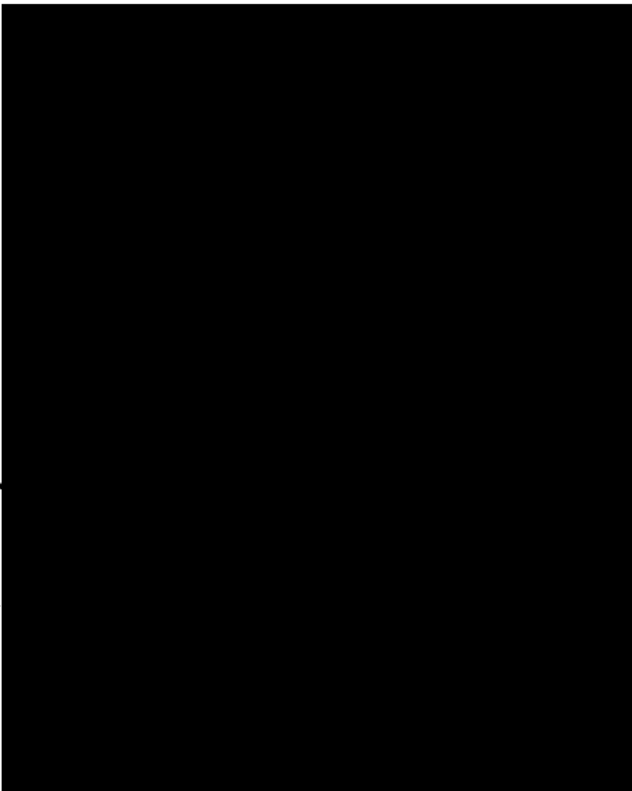
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ABSTRACT

A Look at How We Discuss the Work: Observations of Feedback in the Interpreting Classroom

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The aim of this study is to look at how the work of interpreting is discussed in the classroom. The focus was specifically on the language content and types of feedback being modeled by the instructors to the interpreting students. Data was collected through observations of an Interpreting II and Interpreting III course at San Antonio College. The hypothesis was that there would be a notable difference in the feedback given based on the level of student as well as a decrease in how often the feedback utterances of the students were reframed or redirected. The data showed negligible differences in the type and content of the feedback given by both instructors at the two different levels of the interpreting courses. The data illuminated the need for the incorporation of more appreciation feedback. Further research on how interpreters, mentors, interpreting educators and students discuss the work of interpreting is needed. The

hope is that by implementing strategies that encourage and foster effective discussions
universally we will then change the culture of horizontal violence that is prevalent in the field.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

I decided to focus my research for my thesis on how we, as interpreters, teachers, mentors, and students, discuss and share our work. This decision came about while sitting in the classroom on campus with my Masters in Arts in Interpreting Studies cohort. We were discussing our work samples for an assignment that we were asked to record prior to arriving on campus and how we would be sharing them in small groups. In these small groups we were to collect and deliver data for the person sharing their work sample based on their request of what they were looking to display or improve upon.

We talked in the classroom, before even separating into our smaller groups to have this data collecting and sharing session, about an experience the instructors had with a previous cohort and how they effectively shut down at the thought of sharing their work and receiving feedback. Feedback: a word that incites fear and terror in the psyche of so many individuals. So much so that we avoid the use of the term altogether! I do not have that same visceral reaction to the concept or even the mere mention of the word feedback and I found it interesting that so many of my peers surrounding me shared the same trepidation as that previous cohort did.

I began to reflect on my relationship and experience with feedback and the experiences I have heard from my peers in my local interpreting community. This was not my first time hearing of interpreters being scarred by other interpreters' remarks on their work. Based on anecdotal evidence, it is, unfortunately, a common occurrence; interpreters can be cutthroat and down-right nasty towards each other. I am not sure where this culture stems from and how it became a norm in our field, however, it does exist and is prevalent (see Ott, 2012).

I began to brainstorm some questions that could be posed as a basis for my research; What does effective feedback look like for you? How do you view feedback? Does feedback have any value to you? What influences do you have in the way you talk about the work?

After some time, I began to focus my questions more on the interpreting education classroom; How does feedback content change as the interpreting student advances through the interpreting courses? Does the frequency of reframing/redirecting the students' feedback change as they progress through the interpreting courses?

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to address the issue of ineffective discussions surrounding the work of interpreting. This study looks at how discussions are framed while in the interpreting classroom, specifically skill development courses. I believe that without getting to the root of an issue you will not be able to effect global change. Many interpreters are entering the field of interpreting through an interpreter training program. This is due to the minimum education requirements set forth by certifying bodies such as the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI). For those who go through a program, the classroom is where some of those first experiences with discussing their work takes place. If we can create a standard and begin to equip interpreters entering the field with effective language to talk about the work, I believe we can have an impact on the field in general.

There are two parties involved when discussing the work: the giver and the receiver. In any discussion about work there is the potential to be tasked with collecting and giving data or requesting and receiving data. The scope of this study focuses primarily on the giver, the individual tasked with collecting and giving data or feedback.

Purpose of the study

An unhealthy culture has been created across the interpreting field. A number of working interpreters and students of the field are experiencing hurt from their peers, teachers, mentors and/or colleagues (Block, 2015). When presenting my thoughts and plans of research to my class for the purpose of soliciting a conversation, several of them shared their own experiences with feedback. In my cohort alone you see a range of experiences from not being affected by an occurrence of ‘feedback gone wrong’ to those who have been utterly traumatized by at least one situation in which they received feedback. Even considering such a small sampling of the interpreting population in my cohort, to see the mark being left on some of my peers was enough to move me to action.

This study is exploratory in nature. Starting with a look at what the current literature says about how discussions about the work of interpreting happen, the ideal approach to effective feedback discussions and then observing two interpreting classrooms over the course of a 16-week semester. The hypothesis upon the outset was that a change in the content of the feedback across the different levels of interpreting classes would be present. Additionally, there would be a change in the frequency in which students’ utterances surrounding both their work and the work of their peers would occur less frequently as they matriculated through the interpreting courses.

Theoretical bases and organization

The theoretical foundation for this research is based in part on the Conscious Competence learning model (Broadwell, 1969; Gordon Training International, 1970). The premise of this learning model is that, when learning a new skill, we progress through four stages of competence: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and

unconscious competence. In her work on employee feedback, Hibbert (2013) discusses how, as one passes through each stage of competence, the feedback they receive will progress accordingly. There are several ways to categorize feedback: informal and formal, positive and negative, constructive, formative and summative, to name a few. Hibbert focuses on positive and constructive feedback when discussing what is appropriate across the four stages of competence (p. 151). This study focuses on the appreciation, coaching and evaluation feedback framework proposed by Stone and Heen in their research (2014). Stone and Heen have been working with the Harvard Negotiation Project for more than twenty years, researching and developing the theory and practice of negotiation. Together they penned *Difficult Conversations* and *Thanks for the Feedback*, which have been foundational in their consulting work which focuses on the delivery of effective feedback among other things.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. The participants were limited to the instructors and students enrolled in the Interpreting II and Interpreting III courses at San Antonio College (SAC) during one 16-week semester. The initial intention was to observe the Interpreting I course as well, however, data was not available. There is also a limitation when it comes to determining the level of competence for each student. It is often stated in the interpreter training program at SAC, that studying to become a signed language interpreter is a journey. Everyone progresses, learns, and acquires the language and skill of interpreting at varying paces. This study assumes that the average Interpreting III student has progressed further in the stages of competence than the average Interpreting II student. The data from these two classes is not generalizable per se, however it illuminates some areas of improvement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on feedback is expansive. Even in an attempt to define the concept, there are several contexts in which one can define feedback. The literature review will examine a few of these definitions. The next section will illuminate the culture of feedback specific to the signed language interpreting field as well as explore what literature has to say about what constitutes effective feedback, not only in the field of interpreting but in other practice professions. This chapter will conclude with a deeper view of the varying types of feedback with a focus on the appreciation, coaching and evaluation framework (ACE) and the four stages of competence.

The Definition of Feedback

There are various definitions of feedback. Merriam Webster defines feedback as, “the transmission of evaluative or corrective information about an action, event, or process to the original or controlling source (n.d.)” As it relates to the process of communication, it is a reciprocated response to other messages received (Communication in the Real World, 2016); “cues or input” (Hoza, 2010). Feedback includes information learned through our lived experiences and other people, it’s the information we receive about ourselves and how we learn throughout life in general (Stone and Heen, 2014). Forsythe and Johnson (2017) touch on the complexities in their defining feedback as “...an emotional business in which personal disposition influences what is attended to, encoded, consolidated and eventually retrieved.” For the purpose of this study, we are defining feedback as the discussion and observations, held in a collaborative manner, on an interpreted piece and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the interpretation (Witter-Merithew, 2001).

The Reality of Feedback

Various collaborative relationships exist in the interpreting field: peer to peer, mentor to mentee, and teacher to student. Interpreting students often engage in their first experience with feedback regarding their work with their instructors. The approach typically used is reminiscent of Freire's banking model of education wherein the instructor is the expert on the work, possesses the knowledge, and is to give that information to the student (Gish, 1992). The students follow this same model when engaged in peer-to-peer feedback sessions (p. 21). One could reason that this same approach in discussing the work is then carried into their professional practice.

In a study of interpreting students' experiences with interpreter training programs conducted by Adamiak (2018), feedback was ranked number two in students' negative faculty interactions. This included issues of not receiving enough feedback, receiving mainly negative feedback and feedback that was deemed too harsh, as well as getting no feedback or getting it too late (p. 44). This issue of ineffective feedback is not a new topic of conversation in the literature found on interpreting issues (see Emmart, 2015). There is also literature from other practice professions (e.g. education and nursing) addressing ineffective feedback as well (see Giles et al., 2014; Boud, 2015).

One of the underlying currents in the interpreting profession is horizontal violence. Ott (2011) defines horizontal violence as "persistent behaviors such as gossip, diminishing comments, rudeness, devaluating [sic] others' professional worth, and criticism, perpetrated by members of a group toward one another, whether consistently or inconsistently, that cause harm, anxiety, and stress in the recipient." This creates a breeding ground for practitioners who engage in delivering and/or receiving ineffective feedback. As mentioned by Block (2015), there is a

need for instruction on how to discuss the work in a collaborative manner that is focused on improving the product while respecting the artistic nature of interpreting.

The Ideal of Feedback

As mentioned earlier, collaborative relationships are common in the field of interpreting. It is not uncommon to work with another interpreter as a team. Along with this collaboration comes the opportunity for feedback. According to Witter-Merithew (2001) feedback ought to be an opportunity for the giver and receiver to communicate the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of an interpretation using specific and descriptive observations. Hoza (2010) phrased it well when discussing how to achieve and maintain collaboration and interdependence between team interpreters:

When the focus is on discussing (rather than critiquing) the interpreting process in non-evaluative terms, the team assumes that each team member (and the team itself) is doing his or her best work and it is a matter of enhancing what they do together. The focus on *processing* rather than *critique* is key. (p. 149)

In essence, critique involves assessing, criticizing, and passing judgment (Webster, n.d.; Cambridge, n.d.), which is not the goal. The approach of a shared responsibility for the work, a shared ideology that the goal is to ensure an effective transfer of the message, is key to this form of collaboration.

This idea of collaboration can also occur with the teacher-student construct. Gish (1992) discusses the collaborative approach to feedback in her work, applying a Vygotskian school of thought.

It may be more effective for us to define the feedback session not as an opportunity for the teacher or peer evaluator to share information with a willing object, but a joint meeting for the purpose of collaborative problem solving. (p. 21)

The Language of Feedback

As a colleague, mentor and/or instructor, the type of language and rhetoric used when discussing the work is also a key component to an effective collaboration. Creating an environment that is conducive to this form of effective collaboration can be done by using Foss and Griffin's (1995) proposed invitational rhetoric. In a traditional sense of the term rhetoric, the goal is to change or control another person's thinking or behavior by persuasion. This aligns with the aforementioned banking model where the instructor is the expert on the work.

Traditional rhetoric has undertones of domination (pg. 4). This can have negative effects on the relationship between the collaborators. The relationship between the giver and receiver will factor into the efficacy of the feedback session. Invitational rhetoric, in contrast, is undergirded by principles of equality (Ryan and Nattale, 2001). It is defined by Foss and Griffin (1995) as:

...an invitation to understanding—to enter another's world to better understand an issue and the individual who holds a particular perspective on it. Ultimately, its purpose is to provide the basis for the creation and maintenance of relationships of equality (p. 13).

This results in a collaboration that fosters understanding and contribution from both parties.

Invitational rhetoric creates an equitable, nonjudgmental space; the benefit of which is “appreciation, value, and a sense of equality (pg. 5).” Non-evaluative language, discussing the work using descriptive, specific non-judgmental language also plays a factor in setting the stage for an effective outcome (Witter-Merithew, 2001).

Hoza (2016) emphasizes three techniques that mentors/instructors should use when engaging colleagues/students in discussing their work to further foster an effective environment for collaboration: humble inquiry, process mediation and scaffolding. Humble inquiry, coined by Schein (2009), is the “fine art of drawing someone out, of asking questions to which you do not already know the answer, of building a relationship based on curiosity and interest in the other person”. By engaging in humble inquiry one can gain insight into the other person’s thought process. This is yet another way that relationships are built, problems are solved, and progress is realized: by asking the right questions (Schein, 2013).

As mentioned in the previous section, the goal of the feedback session is often focused on collaborative problem solving, specifically referring to the effectiveness of the interpretation. Process mediation is a technique that can be used to achieve that goal. Colonomos and Moccia (2013) define process mediation as, “an investigation directed by the learner and supported by the mentor that identifies strategies for solving cognitive problems—linguistic, ethical, cultural, and more”. Note the emphasis is on the learner directing the investigation and the mentor (in this study, the instructor) supporting the problem solving. In the early stages of learning, however, the instructor models those critical thinking skills and then scaffolds their support as the student progresses through the stages of competence (Gish, 1992). When engaging in these discussions of the work, awareness of where the student falls in the stages of competence is key to effectively scaffolding (Hoza, 2016, pp. 196-197).

Competence and Types of Feedback

When learning a new skill there are stages of competence that we advance through. These stages are unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence,

and unconscious competence (Broadwell, 1969). In that first stage of unconscious incompetence, we are unaware of what we do not know. We then transition into awareness of what we do not know in conscious incompetence. As we continue to work and progress in learning we then graduate to the level of conscious competence. We are now able to do the task or skill however we are aware of the effort that is going into performing said task or skill. After some time, we then transition into the fourth stage of unconscious competence, where we no longer must think about how to do the task at hand and we go into a somewhat auto-pilot mode of operating.

Applying this to an interpreting student, when they first begin, they are unaware of the skills they have or lack to do the work. As they progress, they become aware of the skills needed and whether they possess them or are still lacking. That awareness continues to grow along with the development of skill until the student fully acquires that skill. Mastery of that skill may not occur even until after the student becomes a working interpreter, however at some point the transition into 'auto-pilot' occurs. As we develop new skills as interpreters there is a constant fluctuation between stages three and four (Pearce, 2010).

Napier, Goswell and McKee (2010) add two more stages to this framework when discussing the signed language interpreters' skill acquisition. This six-stage Cycle of Competence assumes continued acquisition of skills as the interpreter continues throughout their career. Reflection is key to this continued development for practice professionals. Reflective competence is the fifth stage. This stage is where the interpreter reflects on their work and identifies opportunities for further development. Then the cycle begins again, not necessarily back at stage one as they are already aware (due to reflection) of the skill that needs refining or that needs to be acquired. Complacency is the sixth stage that Napier, Goswell and McKee

mention as a possibility to transition into. In this stage there is little to no reflection on the work which can then lead to stage one of unconscious incompetence.

When collecting and giving feedback it is important to realize where in the stages of competence the recipient of the data you're collecting and delivering falls. This will determine the type of feedback that is appropriate.

The Types of Feedback

There are various types of feedback. We often think of feedback as a dichotomy of either being positive or constructive (also referred to as negative). For the purpose of this research, I considered the three types of feedback implemented by Stone and Heen (2014): appreciation, coaching and evaluation (ACE). Appreciation feedback shows gratitude, acknowledges efforts, and is used to motivate and connect with the recipient. Coaching feedback is feedback that is intended to help the recipient grow and learn. Evaluation feedback involves a comparison against a standard, an assessment that tells the recipient where they stand in their growth process. It also sets expectations for continued growth.

All three of these types of feedback are necessary. With evaluation, this is often where you will see the most anxiety in the recipient. Most individuals do not enjoy being judged or assessed; however, this is a critical component of feedback. It allows us to know where we stand in our learning process, whether we've mastered a particular skill. Coaching does involve a bit of evaluation by nature however a great way to differentiate between the two could be to think of one as being more formative (coaching) and the other as evaluative (evaluation). The coaching feedback comes during the learning process to help accelerate and/or focus the learning while evaluation feedback is looking at how you are measuring up to that set standard. Appreciation feedback, to some, may seem like fluff, however it is important to include feedback that is

acknowledging, commending, and affirming the recipients' efforts as well as those things they are doing effectively. According to Sherman (2019), giving appreciation feedback aids in maintaining motivation and building a relationship with the recipient.

When dealing with a recipient that is in the unconsciously incompetent stage the discussion of the work will look different than that of a discussion held with a recipient who is in the unconsciously competent stage. In the earlier stages the expectation is that there would be more coaching. Appreciation feedback is vital here as well to encourage continued development. If evaluation feedback is used in excess here it could have adverse effects on the motivation to progress in the acquisition of the skill. According to Hibbert (2013), constructive criticism can be used in both collaborations however if it is used excessively with the unconsciously incompetent recipient it can end up demoralizing them whereas with the unconsciously competent recipient it is likely to incite an attention to details.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Design

This study uses a naturalistic approach by way of observation. The goal of observational studies is to study a process or phenomenon as it occurs in a natural setting with as little interference as possible (Williams and Chesterman, 2014). The purpose of this study was to observe how interpreting educators and interpreting students discuss the work in a classroom setting. The two research questions that were guiding the observations were:

- How does feedback content change as the interpreting student advances through the interpreting courses?
- Does the frequency of reframing/redirecting the students' feedback change as they progress through the interpreting courses?

The semester in which the observations were conducted was a unique one. Typically, the courses in the interpreter training program at San Antonio College (SAC) are conducted as in-person classes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were conducted remotely via Zoom. In addition to the classes being held synchronously on Zoom, they were also being recorded and archived so students could access them. This allowed for the observations to take place with minimal interference. The observations were conducted at the end of the semester, using the recordings from selected time frames throughout the 16-week semester.

Participants

The initial intention was to observe the three different interpreting classes in the San Antonio College interpreter training program: Interpreting I, Interpreting II and Interpreting III. These are the three required interpreting courses students must complete (along with other required courses) in order to take the internship capstone course and complete the program.

In the Interpreting I course students learn about the interpreting process, interpreting models and the requisite skills for achieving an effective interpretation of the message when interpreting between English and American Sign Language (ASL). In the Interpreting II course students build on their interpreting and discourse analysis skills as the level of complexity increases. During this course students also engage in self-analysis and begin to evaluate their peers' work. The Interpreting III course is where students apply and integrate their cognitive processes on even more complex materials while continuing to strengthen their skills practicing with simulated interpreting scenarios. Interpreting I, Interpreting II and Interpreting III are considered milestone courses. San Antonio College defines a milestone course as “a course that is critical for success in the program” on the sign language interpreter degree plan in their course catalog

There are three faculty members who teach these courses (myself included). Depending on student enrollment, each course has anywhere from two to three sections of no more than 10 students enrolled in each section. This is below the recommended class sizes set forth by the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE), under which the San Antonio College Interpreting Training Program is currently accredited (CCIE Standard 4, 2018).

Prior consent was solicited from the faculty members of the target courses; formally via email, preceded informally by a text message. The enrolled students were then presented with the proposed study. To be eligible for this study participants had to have been 18 years or older and currently enrolled in or teaching the Interpreting I, Interpreting II or Interpreting III course at San Antonio College (SAC). Participants submitted their consent electronically (via email) to participate in the observations and were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and at any point they could withdraw consent without penalty (see Appendix A). In

addition to giving their express consent to participate in the observations, each participant, both the faculty members and students, were given an anonymous survey. The survey was disseminated using Google Forms. The participants were able to access the Google Form via a link on the corresponding anonymous survey consent form (see Appendix B). This form did not require a signature. Participation in the survey served as consent. The purpose of this survey was to gather insight on the background of the participants (see Appendix C for a list of the survey questions).

Observations

An observation opportunity was selected from three stages in the 16-week semester: Week 6, Week 9 and Week 13; one towards the beginning of the semester (during the month of February), one around the midterm time frame (during the month of March) and the last one towards the end of the semester (during the month of April). After official consent was obtained, emails were sent to the other two faculty members throughout the semester, during the aforementioned time frames for the links to their recorded class sessions. A response and access to the Zoom recordings for only the Interpreting II and Interpreting III courses were received. This study therefore only includes the data from three observations each of one of the two sections of the Interpreting II and Interpreting III courses. These courses are taught by Instructor A and Instructor B respectively. The observations were conducted using the Zoom recordings of the provided links of three class sessions per instructor after the conclusion of the semester.

During each observation the feedback utterances of both the faculty member and the students that gave express consent to participate in the study were tracked. The goal was to code the content of the feedback. The categories included whether the feedback was focused on language or on the interpreting process. For the faculty members, it was also noted whether

evaluative language or non-evaluative language was used and whether the feedback type was appreciation, coaching or evaluation. The type of feedback was identified by color coded tally marks: appreciation was marked in blue, coaching was marked in purple, and evaluation was marked in red. For the student utterances, it was noted as to whether the feedback was on their own work or on that of their peers' and if their utterance was reframed or not. Whether or not the student's utterance was reframed or not was noted by a yellow tally mark or a green one respectively (see Appendix D for the observation form).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The first observation that was conducted was of Instructor B's class that took place during Week 9 of the semester. The students engaged in several drills during this class. These drills included an exercise on commonly confused signs, an exercise focused on practicing numbers and a round robin of interpreting sentences from English to ASL. The students then worked on interpreting assignments working in the four modes: interpreting from spoken English to ASL, spoken English to transliterated signed English, ASL to spoken English and written English to ASL (sight translation). The students debriefed with the instructor periodically throughout the class period; after, and at times during, each drill or exercise. 97.5% of the instructor's feedback for this class period was codified as *coaching feedback*.

The second observation was conducted on Interpreter A's Week 6 class. During the class the instructor conducted one-on-one feedback sessions with each student. The students had recently completed their first Benchmark Evaluation for Students (BES). The BES closely resembles the performance portion of the BEI (Board for Evaluation of Interpreters), the interpreter certification test students must pass to graduate from the San Antonio College Interpreter Training Program. 74.02% of the feedback across each one-on-one session was codified as *evaluation feedback* while *coaching feedback* accounted for 24.68% of the feedback. After the completion of the initial two observations, it appeared that the type of feedback observed was affected by the type of feedback session or class session.

I noted a tendency of Instructor A to use "we language" in their one-on-one feedback sessions. "We language" is language that fosters inclusivity by using words like *we*, *us* and *our* (University of Minnesota, 2016). Some examples of utterances from the feedback sessions include the following:

- “As many things as we can put on autopilot to help... the better off we are to handle those more complex and dense things that come up in our work.”
- “We can be a little more efficient by using those referents as well.”
- “When we’re in it we’re doing the thing and it feels like it’s working then when we look back at the work then sometimes, we realize, oh, that’s not what I signed/said.”

The next observation that was conducted was on Instructor B’s class which took place during Week 6. This class was, in a way, comparable to Instructor A’s class during Week 6, in that there were a few one-on-one sessions giving post-evaluation feedback. This was not the only thing that occurred during the class session however so there are limitations in making too close a comparison. Instructor A began class with setting the students up to work independently while conducting the one-on-one sessions for the remainder of the class. This resulted in the feedback, coded from Instructor A’s Week 6 class, solely coming from the evaluations of their recent test. Whereas, in addition to doing a few one-on-one sessions, Instructor B also engaged the students in a few class activities and drills: conceptual accuracy and ordering/structuring/listening. A noted difference between Instructor A and Instructor B’s one-on-one sessions is that Instructor B gave feedback during the session while watching the students’ work. Each one-on-one session began with the student selecting which assignment and portion of the assignment, whether it was the beginning, middle or end, that they were soliciting feedback on. The instructor and student then watched the selected work together and the instructor gave spoken and documented feedback in GoReact (the online platform used in our program to capture, grade, and give feedback on students’ recorded interpreting assignments).

After completing the observations for the remaining three class periods overall, there were zero occurrences of reframing/redirecting of student feedback utterances. There were not any observed instances of students giving each other feedback. There were instances where students made observations about their own work. There was no redirection or reframing here either.

The rarest occurrence of the different types of feedback was *appreciation feedback*. Of all the feedback comments observed and codified, *appreciation feedback* accounted for 4.9% of Instructor A's feedback and 0.6% of Instructor B's.

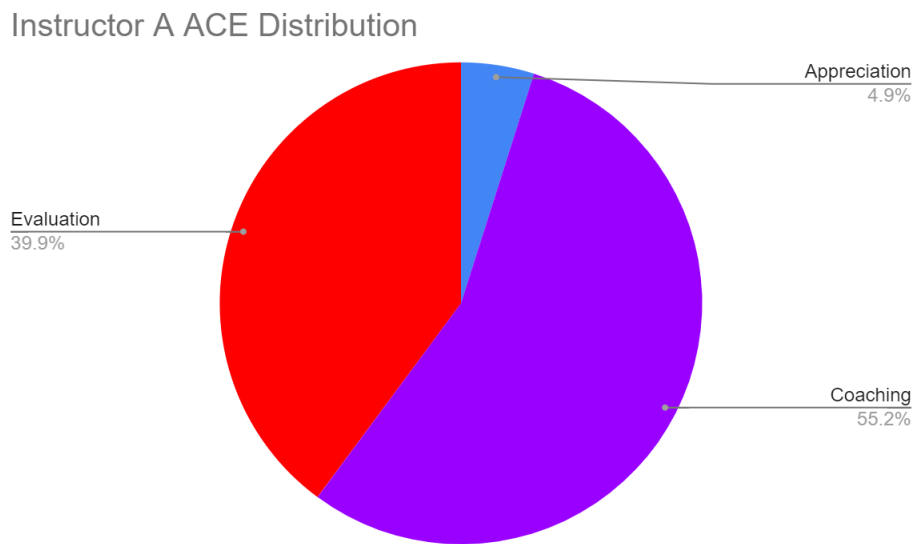


Figure 1. Instructor A ACE Distribution

Instructor B ACE Distribution

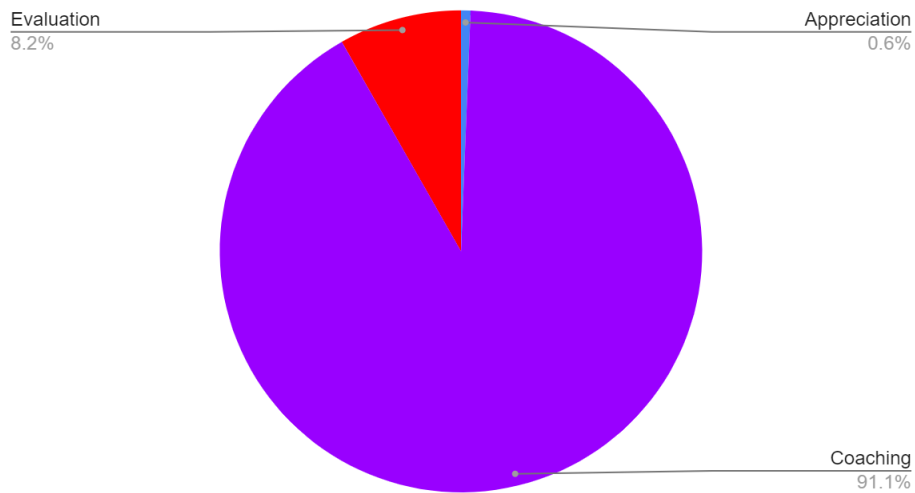


Figure 2. Instructor B ACE Distribution

There were differences in the percentage of language-related and process-related feedback between the two instructors. There were more process-related feedback comments noted from Instructor A; accounting for 58.04% of the feedback given.

Instructor A Feedback Distribution

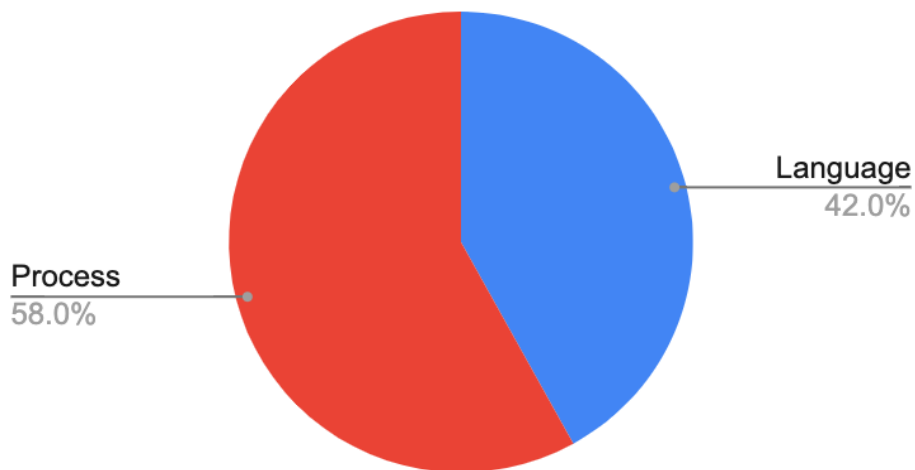


Figure 3. Instructor A Feedback Distribution

Instructor B gave a relatively balanced amount of both, with process-related feedback accounting for 48.73% of her total feedback comments.

Instructor B Feedback Distribution



Figure 4. Instructor B Feedback Distribution

In the students' feedback, the focus was also primarily process related with 64.71% and 64.15% respectively. Note, these student feedback comments were related to their own work and not that of their peers'.

Interpreting II Student Feedback Distribution

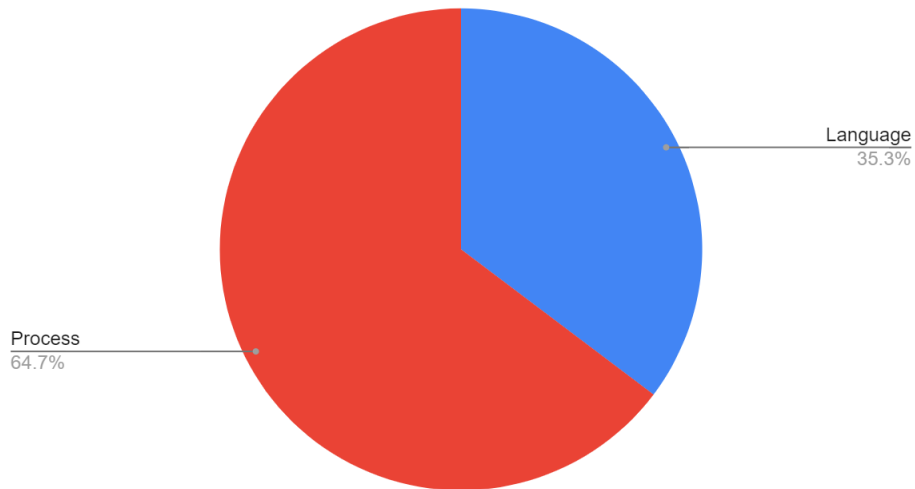


Figure 5. Interpreting II Student Feedback Distribution

Interpreting III Student Feedback Distribution

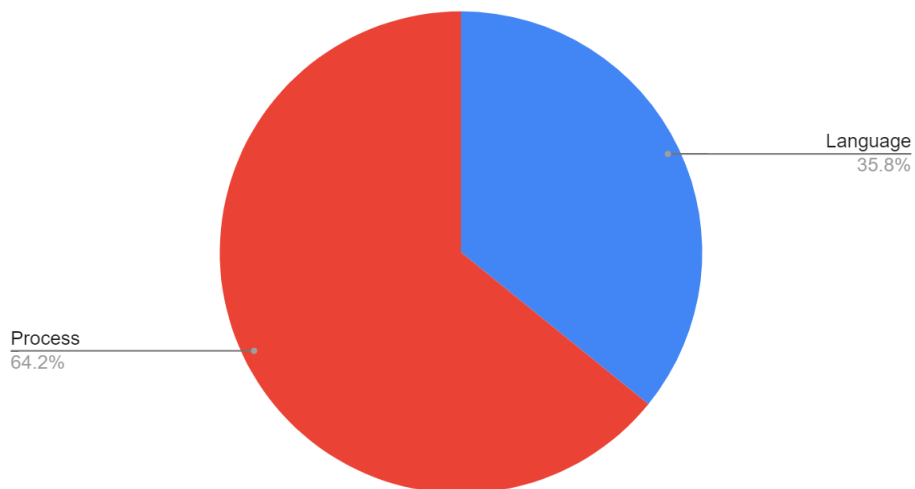


Figure 6. Interpreting III Student Feedback Distribution

Evaluative language was most often used when giving evaluation feedback. Evaluative language accounted for 16.08% of Instructor A's overall feedback and 8.86% of Instructor B's overall feedback. When evaluative language was used, it tended to be positive. Some examples of positive evaluation language include the words good, nice, and great, to name a few.

Instructor A Evaluative vs Non-Evaluative Language

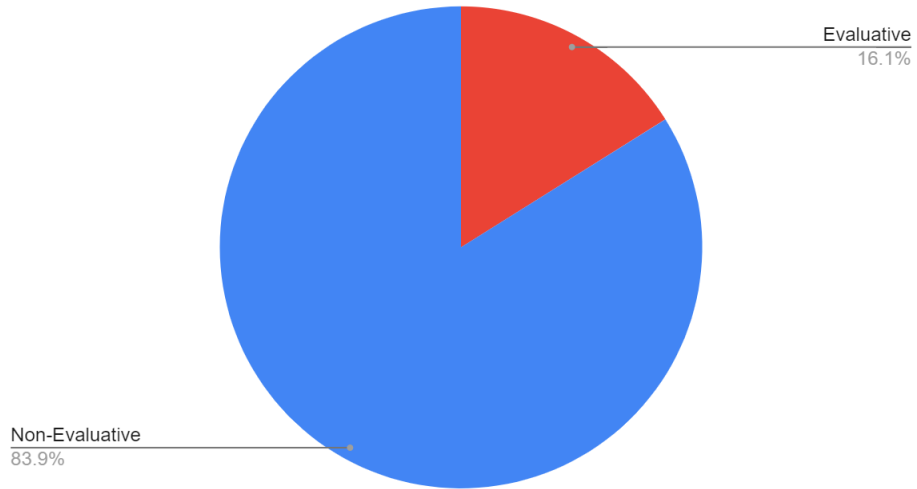


Figure 7. Instructor A Evaluative vs Non-Evaluative Language

Instructor B Evaluative v Non-Evaluative Language

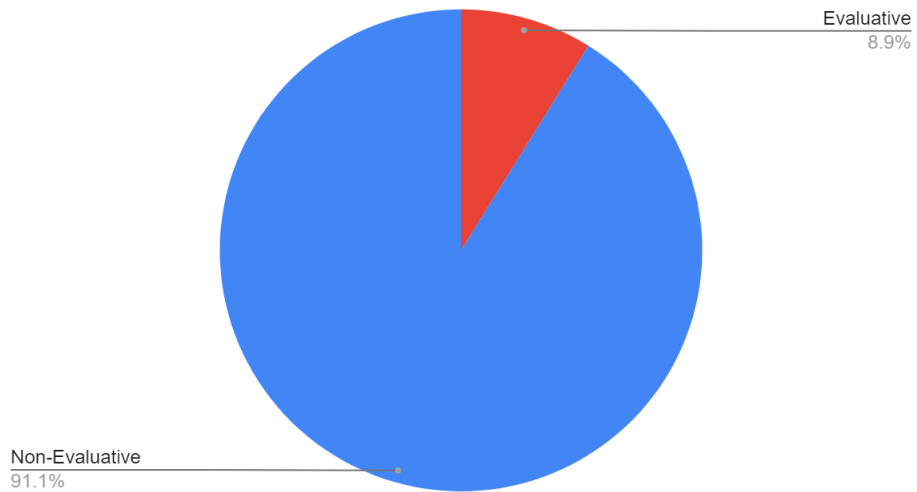


Figure 8. Instructor B Evaluative vs Non-Evaluative Language

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to observe how the work of interpreting is discussed in the interpreting classroom. The study was looking specifically for the content of the feedback; whether it was language related or process related, the use of evaluative versus non-evaluative language, and the rate at which appreciation, coaching and evaluation feedback were given relative to the presumed competence level of the students.

After observations and analysis of the data, the findings show that feedback across the Interpreting II and Interpreting III course tended to include the use of non-evaluative language. This included both the faculty members' and students' utterances. In the instances where evaluative language was used, the tendency was towards positive evaluative language.

When looking at the content of the feedback, the findings showed roughly two-thirds of the feedback in both the Interpreting II and Interpreting three courses were process-related. This seems to be consistent with the expected command of the working languages, English and American Sign Language (ASL), at this point in the program. The students, at this stage in the program, have completed at least four levels of ASL, however they are still building their vocabulary as they encounter new topics in the interpreting courses.

As mentioned previously, the acquisition of the requisite skills to become a certified sign language interpreter is an individual journey. In considering the individual journey, ultimately feedback should be tailored to the individual student. The expectation, however, would be that students in Interpreting III are further along in the stages of competence compared to those in Interpreting II overall. My hypothesis regarding the content changing as the student progresses did not seem to be supported from the findings of this study. According to Hibbert (2013) in referencing the four stages of competence framework, when working with an individual that is

unconsciously incompetent, the content of the feedback would contain more appreciation and coaching and less evaluation as to not demoralize the individual. For the consciously incompetent individual, the amount of coaching feedback would increase to a more balanced ratio with that of the appreciation feedback and evaluation feedback would increase slightly so. This is to ensure the individual is developing their skills. As the individual progresses to conscious competence appreciation and coaching feedback are still required however there is an increased amount of evaluation feedback at this stage. This allows the individual to hone their skills. Once the individual reaches unconscious competence less emphasis is placed on appreciation feedback as to avoid complacency and more emphasis is placed on evaluation feedback to ensure the individual is attending to the details or intricacies of the skill. As this study did not focus on identifying the competency level of each individual student but assumed the average Interpreting III student would be further advanced than the Interpreting II student, this could explain the similarities in the content of the feedback in both courses.

There are more frequent instances of coaching and evaluation feedback, while appreciation feedback occurs with considerably less frequency. The lack of appreciation feedback brings up the concern of whether this could play a role in a continued perpetuation of the horizontal violence seen across the field of interpreting. Considering the tendency of feedback having the potential to be a traumatic experience, there is space to increase the amount of appreciation feedback. Would an increase in appreciation feedback in the interpreting classroom eventually have an impact on the horizontal violence present in the interpreting field? Those interpreting students become working interpreters and may model the way they give feedback after the way they saw their instructors giving feedback. Could the effective use of non-evaluative language being modeled have positive implications?

Recommendations

Further research is needed to see if an intentional increase of appreciation feedback has a positive impact on the student/interpreters' experience with feedback in general.

Is the lack of appreciation feedback influenced by the instructors' preferences when it comes to receiving feedback? Both of the observed instructors are working interpreters as well. This is often the case with interpreter educators. Is there any correlation between Gary Chapman's love language concept to how one prefers to receive feedback? This may also account for the negligible difference in the type of feedback given in both the Interpreting II and Interpreting III courses. If the instructors have similar preferences when it comes to receiving feedback and those preferences impact what they focus on when delivering feedback. There is opportunity here for further study to see if there is indeed a correlation.

There was no opportunity to observe the students giving their peers feedback in this current study. Further study would be needed to gather data on whether student feedback utterances are reframed/redirected more often when they are giving peer feedback compared to when they are giving self-feedback. This would presumably yield data in regard to how often their comments are re-framed and/or restructured. This would also allow the observer to see if the style of giving feedback mirrors that of the instructor.

This study is a limited scope of what feedback looks like in two of the three interpreting courses at San Antonio College (SAC). A greater sampling of observations would yield more data to see if these trends that have been identified are accurate. Continued study would be necessary to ascertain whether there is indeed a progression or scaffolding happening across the three classes, as it relates to the percentage of language-related feedback versus process-related feedback and appreciation, coaching and evaluation feedback as the students progress through the levels of competency. Research is also needed to determine the average progression of

students through the stages of competency as they matriculate through their interpreter training program. This would be invaluable information to interpreter educators. This has the potential to foster a more consistent education experience for interpreting students across all programs which would then lead to the necessary change when it comes to the culture of feedback in the interpreting field as a whole.

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APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

Observations of Feedback in Interpreting Class Western Oregon University, MA in the Interpreting Studies Program Chevon Nicole Ramey

Who is eligible to participate?

Interpreting instructors and students who are currently teaching or enrolled in either Interpreting I, Interpreting II, Interpreting III or Interpreting Seminar.

Consent to Participate

You are invited to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study. You may ask the principal investigator any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the principal investigator if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the investigators will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why is this research being conducted?

The purpose of this project is to identify the culture of feedback across the interpreting courses by observing the type of language used by students and instructors when they are engaged in discussing the students' interpreting work at various stages throughout the interpreting courses.

What will I be asked to do? When will I be asked to complete these tasks?

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to complete a short survey collecting basic demographic information as well as consenting to being observed in your regular classroom setting.

The class sessions will be recorded, and the recordings will be used for review purposes only. The principal investigator/observer will keep all materials in a password protected file. Once the research has been submitted for publication, password protected recordings will be destroyed.

Will there be any risk or discomfort for me?

This project will require you to engage in your respective interpreting course as you typically would. Participation in this study is confidential. You will not be identified in the published research. There will be no physical risk of any kind. Participation will not impact your grade in any way.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

Through your participation in this study, you will help members of the signed language interpreting and interpreter education field identify best practices in discussing the work of interpreting.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?

If you experience stress, you are advised to utilize counseling services. You may withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, all data related to you will be deleted.

Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

Chevon Nicole Ramey, Principal Investigator – cramey18@wou.edu or 210.486.1109 or WOU Supervising Faculty, Amanda R. Smith at smithar@wou.edu.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the WOU Institutional Review Board at any time regarding the study at 503.838.8589.

Will I be paid for my participation?

There will be no direct compensation for your participation in this research.

Will it cost me anything to participate?

There are no anticipated out-of-pocket costs.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signature of person agreeing to take part

Date

Printed name of person above

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

Date

APPENDIX B: Anonymous Survey Consent Form

Anonymous Survey Consent Form

Dear Student,

My name is Chevon Nicole Ramey and I am a graduate student at Western Oregon University (WOU) working toward a MA degree in Interpreting Studies. I am researching under the supervision of Amanda R. Smith, smithar@wou.edu. The results of this study will lead to a graduate thesis that is a partial graduation requirement. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board.

I am conducting a study seeking to understand the culture of feedback/discussion(s) about interpreting work as modeled/experienced in the interpreting classes at the San Antonio College Interpreter Training Program. For the purpose of this study, the discussions about the work (feedback) will focus on classroom sessions with your instructor and fellow classmates, discussing an exercise/assignment(s) in your interpreting class.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve taking a survey that may be accessed through the following link:

Participation in the survey will serve as your consent. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Your responses will be kept confidential, but the data may be used in publications, reports or presentations. Names and identifying information will not be collected.

Participants in this study must be 18 years or older. They must attend the San Antonio College Interpreter Training Program and be enrolled in an interpreting class taught by one of the three instructors observed in this study.

You may choose not to answer or opt out of the survey at any point without consequence. There are no discomforts or risks expected during this survey. Participation in this study will add to the body of knowledge in the field of signed language interpreting.

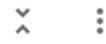
If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Chevon Nicole Ramey at cramey18@wou.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Chair of the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board at (503) 838-9200 or irb@wou.edu.

Thank you,
Chevon Nicole Ramey
Western Oregon University

APPENDIX C: Survey Questions

Observations of Feedback in Interpreting Class



Form description

By clicking "Yes" I acknowledge that I am 18 years or older and am currently enrolled in or teaching one or more of the interpreting classes at SAC (Interpreting I, Interpreting II, Interpreting III and/or Interpreting Seminar), and I give my consent to participate in a research study. *

Yes

No

What is your age group? *

Less than 18

18-19

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 or over

What is your gender identity? *

Short answer text

Which categories best describe you? Check all that apply. *

- Native American, Indian, Alaska Native
- Asian, Asian American
- Hispanic, Latino, Latinx, Spanish origin
- Black, African American
- Middle Eastern, North African
- Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander
- White, Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer
- Other...

What is the highest level of education you have completed? Mark only one. *

- Some high school
- High school graduate, diploma, GED
- Some college Trade/technical vocational training
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Some graduate school
- Master Degree
- Some professional or doctoral school
- Professional Degree
- Doctorate Degree
- Other...

Which of the following would you consider your native language(s)? Check all that apply. *

- American Sign Language
- English
- Spanish
- Other...

Currently, which of the following languages do you use fluently? Check all that apply. *

- American Sign Language
- English
- Spanish
- Other...

How many years have you been using American Sign Language? *

Short answer text

⋮

Select one: *

- I am a student in the program.
- I am an instructor in the program.

Interpreting Educators



Only answer the following questions if you are an interpreting educator currently employed at SAC.

Which certifications do you hold? Check all that apply. *

- No certifications
- BEI Basic
- BEI Advanced
- BEI Master
- NIC
- Other...

Which interpreting class(es) are you currently teaching? Check all that apply. *

- Interpreting I
- Interpreting II
- Interpreting III
- Interpreting Seminar

How many years of experience do you have providing feedback to mentees/students? *

Short answer text

.....

Interpreting Students



Only answer the following questions if you are an interpreting student currently enrolled at SAC.

What is your declared major? *

- Interpreting
- DSS
- n/a

What is your enrollment level? *

- Full time
- Part time
- Continuing Education

Which interpreting class(es) are you currently enrolled in? Check all that apply. *

- Interpreting I
- Interpreting II
- Interpreting III
- Interpreting Seminar

Which of the following best reflects your average grades in your current program of study? *

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F
- n/a

APPENDIX D: Observation Form

Student

	Language Related Feedback	Process Related Feedback
Own		
Peer		

Color coding for tally marks
 Reframed
 Not reframed

Teacher

	Language Related Feedback	Process Related Feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluative Language		
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-evaluative Language		

Color coding for tally marks
 Appreciation
 Coaching
 Evaluation