

ASL renditions of an English
narrative: Accommodation
through chaining and
explaining/connecting in ASL

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questions

- What types of rhetorical devices are used in signed language?
- How do skilled signers deliver a narrative to different audiences?
- What types of discourse strategies are used for supporting comprehension?

a culturally-relevant narrative

- Story about the life of Don Petingill
 - a Deaf leader in the U.S. Deaf community
 - passed away in 2006
- Drafted in English, but delivered in ASL
- Two Deaf native signers (“Kevin” & “James”)
- Each signer shared narrative with 3 audiences

see Quinto-Pozos & Mehta (2010) for a complete description of the methodology

signers & their audiences

James

- children in elementary school
- senior citizens at Deaf Club
- adults at state convention of NAD

Kevin

- children in elementary school
- friends gathered at home for BBQ
- graduates & guests at Deaf high school commencement ceremony

example 1
excerpt of English narrative
“MSSD”

However, also during that time, Gallaudet University offered him a job as Coordinator of Off Campus Studies at the newly formed Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD). So, in 1970, Don moved to Washington D.C. to, among other things, work with Deaf youth.

audience: young children

Kevin “MSSD”

Video here

audience: senior citizens
 Kevin "MSSD"

Video here

audience: conference attendees
 Kevin "MSSD"

Video here

our foci

✧ **chaining**: any example of the signer using more than one device (e.g., fingerspelled word, sign, point) to refer to the same entity
(Humphries & MacDougal 1999/2000, Blumenthal-Kelly 1995)

✧ **connecting & explaining** (our definition): any example of the signer communicating information that:

- is not in the original English text
- can be interpreted as supporting comprehension of a concept, object, or process.

coding criteria & conventions

✧ **chaining**: (bold font in examples)

✧ **connecting & explaining**: (underlined text in examples)

transcription and coding of Kevin's ASL rendition of the 'MSSD' English text	
young children	AGAIN, MOVE WASHINGTON D-C, WASHINGTON D-C. <u>THAT CAPITAL AMERICA POINT WASHINGTON D-C.</u> PRO-3SG MANAGE M-S-S-D , OTHER DEAF SCHOOL THERE WASHINGTON D-C M-S-S-D . <u>MANAGE STUDY[aspect] HOW LIVE #OFF CAMPUS, LIVE DORM head-shake, #OFF MOVE-OUT LIVE #APT KNOW MOVE, STUDY[aspect] HOW SUCCESS HOW STUDY.</u>
senior citizens	THAT TIME PRO3SG GALLAUDET THERE GALLAUDET+ COLLEGE OFFER-HIM WORK MOVE-TO THERE, <i>huh</i> WHY? M-S-S-D M-O-D-E-L S-E-C-O-N-D-A-R-Y SCHOOL FOR DEAF , <u>#HIGH-SCHOOL NEAR GALLAUDET DV(next-to-each-other) #HIGH-SCHOOL POINT NEW SET-UP NEW. NEED SOME ONE BRING-IN ESTABLISH RELATE DORM QUOTES. PRO.3SG ACCEPT MOVE-TO RESEARCH ON #OFF CAMPUS PLAN HOW.</u>
conference attendees	GALLAUDET COLLEGE OFFER-HIM WORK. PRO3SG MOVE WASHINGTON D-C. BECOME WHAT? COORDINATE+AGENT O-F #OFF CAMPUS STUDY FOR M-S-S-D M-O-D-E-L SECOND S-E-C-O-N-D-A-R-Y SCHOOL DEAF IN WASHINGTON D-C. NEW SET-UP 1970 OFFER-HIM WORK MOVE, WORK[aspect] PRO.3SG.

connecting & explaining
 a closer look, Kevin
 (young children)

THAT CAPITAL AMERICA POINT, WASHINGTON D-C.

✧ explanation of a place, Washington D.C., as a location by use of a point to a locus

✧ connecting the concept, Washington D.C., to possible prior knowledge, as the capitol of America

connecting & explaining
 a closer look, Kevin
 (senior citizens)

M-S-S-D, M-O-D-E-L S-E-C-O-N-D-A-R-Y SCHOOL FOR DEAF , #HIGH-SCHOOL NEAR GALLAUDET, NEXT-TO-EACH-OTHER (CL:AA). #HIGH-SCHOOL POINT, NEW SET-UP NEW.

- ✧ explanation of the location of an entity, MSSD
- ✧ connecting the entity by location and use of depicting verb (i.e., classifier), as it relates to Gallaudet University

example 2
 excerpt of English narrative: "NAD"

At age 26, he invested in a printing shop for \$9500, a business where he hired and trained several Deaf employees. His business printed some NAD publications during this time. This is but one example of Don supporting the Deaf community.

transcription and coding of James' ASL rendition of the 'NAD' English text

young children	<u>SOME YOU N-A-D. KNOW N-A-D. KNOW N-A-D? MEAN ALL-OVER U-S-A. N. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DEAF. MEAN SUPPORT HELP DEAF RIGHTS ALL-OVER U-S-A. DIVIDED-UP... [response to child:YOU RIGHT, YOU RIGHT.] UNDERSTAND. N-A-D DIVIDED-UP IN EACH S-T-A-T-E. SAME-AS I-A-D. I-N-D HERE. I-D-A-H-O. I-A-D. TEXAS. T-A-D. I-L-L. I-A-D. O-H-I-O. O-A-D. DIFFERENT ALL-OVER. DIVIDED-UP. J-R N-A-D, YOU YOUNG BELOW. DIVIDED-UP. J-R N-A-D. YES.</u>
friends	HIRE SOME DEAF WORK+AGENT. ACTIVE. E-V-E-N N-A-D PRESIDENT. N-A-D ALL-OVER U-S. PRINT MAGAZINE FOR FOR PRINT. CONTINUE TO OLD-42....
graduates and family members	<u>HERE-2H INDIANA MOVE-2H. WORK SAME V-R SERVICE COUNSEL FOR DEAF CLIENT INVOLVE ACTIVE. AND INVOLVE WITH I-A-D. PRESIDENT I INDIANA ASSOCIATION DEAF UNDER N-A-D ALL-OVER U-S ACTIVE.</u>

audience: young children
 James "NAD"

Video here

connecting & explaining
 a closer look, James
 (young children)

UNDERSTAND, N-A-D DIVIDED-UP IN EACH S-T-A-T-E. SAME-AS I-A-D, I-N-D HERE, I-D-A-H-O, I-A-D, TEXAS, T-A-D, I-L-L, I-A-D, O-H-I-O, O-A-D. DIFFERENT ALL-OVER, DIVIDED-UP. J-R N-A-D, YOU YOUNG BELOW. DIVIDED-UP, J-R N-A-D, YES.

- ✧ explaining the entity NAD, as a national organization and its structure with state chapters (four examples of state chapters)
- ✧ connecting the entity by utilizing the children's knowledge of the Junior NAD

audience: graduates and family members
 James "NAD"

Video here

connecting & explaining
 a closer look, James
 graduates and family members

AND INVOLVE WITH I-A-D, PRESIDENT I
 INDIANA ASSOCIATION DEAF UNDER N-
 A-D ALL-OVER U-S ACTIVE.

↪ explaining that Don was president of the local
 NAD chapter

↪ explanation of the entity, NAD, as residing
 over the Indiana state chapter

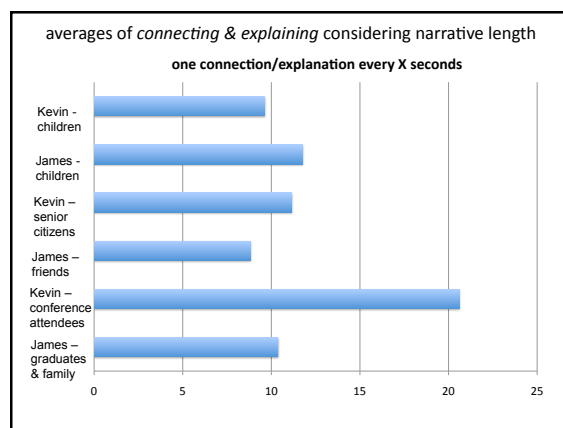
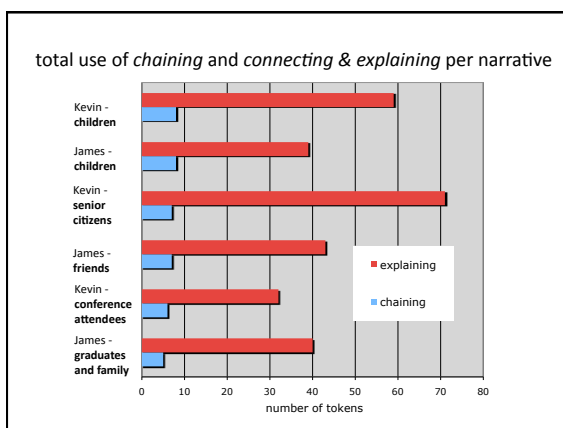
general comments about the data

chaining

- ↪ occurs with both child and adult audiences
- ↪ 5-10 instances per narrative

connecting & explaining

- ↪ occurs with both child and adult audiences
- ↪ not necessarily more common with children
- ↪ qualitatively more detailed for children in some cases
- ↪ occurs, on average, several times per minute



characterizing these strategies...

- a type of sociolinguistic variation
- conditioned by *stylistic factors*; not strictly attributable to linguistic factors (Rickford & Eckert, 2001)
- *Style* is what an individual does with a language in relation to other people
- one model of **language accommodation**: language style as *audience design* (Bell 1984, 2001)
 - speakers design (or plan) their style primarily for and in response to their audience

our hesitancy to use the term
 “accommodation”

- often used to refer to cases where the hearer/interlocutor is presumed to need less complex language
 - *child-directed speech*
 - *intergenerational communication* (e.g., language directed at elderly people)
- the term *accommodation* is already commonly used within the Deaf community to refer to access to communication

our proposal

- these strategies for encouraging comprehension represent a type of stylistic variation influenced by:
 - knowledge of the linguistic resources of ASL
 - norms of the culture
- Deaf cultural norm: the need to share information (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996)
- Possible way to refer to both types of strategies: **shaping** the message

shaping in the sign literature

- **Deaf education:**
 - Deaf teachers with children (Bailes, 1999, 2001; Christie et al. 1999; Lartz & Lestina 1995; Schleper 1996)
 - acquisition of world knowledge & literacy (Bailes, 2001; Barbieri & Landolfi, 1994; Singleton & Morgan, 2006)
 - *scaffolding* (Cripps 2008, Cazden 2001)
- **Signed Language Interpreting:**
 - *expansion* discourse strategies (Lawrence, 1994)
- **Deaf Culture:**
 - obtaining *cultural literacy* (Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan 1996, Singleton & Morgan 2006)

idea of *shaping* in the spoken language literature

- concept of *chaining*
 - *reiterative code-switching*
 - negotiation of a collective social identity (Pakir, 1989)
 - accommodation (Pakir, 1989)
 - amplification of a message (Tay, 1989)
 - emphasis (Auer, 1995; Eldridge, 1996; Tay, 1989)
 - reinforcement or clarification of a message (Auer, 1995; Eldridge, 1996)
 - use of *translation equivalents* in child-directed speech with bilinguals (de Houwer, 2009)

some answers to our questions

- What types of rhetorical devices are used in signed language?
 - **chaining**
 - **connecting & explaining**
- How do skilled signers deliver a narrative to different audiences?
 - **by gauging what the audience may know and tapping into that knowledge**
- What types of discourse strategies are used for supporting comprehension?
 - **shaping strategies: chaining, connecting & explaining**

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