

LEGAL INTERPRETING SKILL DEVELOPMENT: TEXT ANALYSIS OF LEGAL TEXTS

You can use any ASL or English legal texts to focus on analyzing the following aspects of the text. This multi-step process is based on a fairly standard approach to discourse analysis in interpreter training programs. Some of the steps have been modified, and others have been added.

Activities:

1. Think about the topic of the text - prior to viewing it entirely - and create a random list of all the pieces of information you already know about the topic. This will help you to access your long-term memory and your world-knowledge base.
2. View the text as many times as necessary until you feel comfortable that you understand it.
3. Jot down a random list of all the concepts from the text that you can recall. Compare the prediction list and the content list to see how much of your world knowledge was addressed in the text.
4. Create a mapping (a visual representation) of the text, followed by a brief outline. The key with both steps is to look for key concepts and words / symbols to help you remember what is being discussed.
5. Retell the text in your own words - using the same language as was used on the tape. If the text was originated in English - retell it in English. If it was originated in ASL - retell it in ASL. Change your retelling process by changing your "audience." Consider how the retelling would differ if you were conveying the text to children, to senior citizens, to a group of professionals, to a classroom of students in a college setting, to your boss, to your family members or best friend. Consider how the content would change depending on the context (the circumstances surrounding an act or event, the setting in which a specific discourse occurs, so on).
6. After retelling the story, create a list of linguistic considerations you want to focus on when you interpret the text into the target language. This step requires you to adjust your thinking about the text from the original language to a different language. So, if you were to tell an English text in ASL, what linguistic features would you need to incorporate? If you were to shift from ASL to English, what linguistic features would you need to consider?
7. Next, consider the information within the text that is culturally bound. This refers to those pieces of information that most people would not understand unless they were a member of the culture. For example, non-deaf people do not appreciate the importance of the deaf identity or the schools for the deaf as part of the deaf identity. Consequently, when deaf people talk about their experiences, they are not received with the same intent as deaf people receive them. So, work with the text and identify what concepts come up that would require cultural insight to appreciate. Then, consider how you would convey the concepts in the target language.
8. Retell the text in the target language. Again, this means to tell the language in the language other than it was originated in. You can adjust the content again by changing the setting / audience to whom you are telling the text. This is good practice for adapting meaning to the needs of the audience and for considering different registers (levels of formality) in the way you use language.
9. When you feel comfortable with your retelling, practice interpreting the text simultaneously. If possible, tape yourself interpreting the text and then create a transcription of the work. Compare the information in your transcription with the original text to determine your overall effectiveness in conveying an equivalent message. Repeat the taping and transcription process as often as you would like - again, changing the audience to whom you are interpreting.

10. Repeat the steps with as many texts as possible - both those that originate in English and those that originate in ASL. Broadening your analysis of a broad variety of texts, considering how information is organized and the factors that influence meaning in the text, will enhance your world-knowledge and your general analytical skills.

Resource Materials:

English videos with legal context

- <https://youtu.be/epb6bxVZkIq> - Description of injuries patients might sustain while in nursing care and legal implications
- <https://youtu.be/dyHQhQJ8LkQ> - Explanation of HIPAA
- <https://youtu.be/-YI8Tq2B-3s> - Discussion of how to deal with legal and financial issues (strong British accent)
- https://youtu.be/_Xop5vkxvFA - Discussion of legal and financial woes by a veteran

Annotation: After returning from deployment, Brent's battle had only just begun. He turned to drinking to deal with stress. He bounced between jobs and relationships while trying to cope with flashbacks, financial problems, and depression - until he finally reached out for help from V.A.

- <https://youtu.be/LXa1gK1UXCk> - Discussion of the recovery process for injuries sustained by a veteran

Annotation: Recovering from burn wounds to 40 percent of his upper body was Bobby's first challenge. The second was learning how to recognize his invisible wounds. If his wife had not driven him to the hospital that night, Bobby would not be around today to tell his story.

ASL Texts with legal context

- <https://www.northeastern.edu/cali/annotated-bibliography/> - Annotated bibliography
- <https://youtu.be/TC5Oq9UQ8VM> - Tips for lawyers working with deaf or deafblind clients
- <https://youtu.be/dKBYwkPX5d8> - Discussion about working with your lawyer
- <https://youtu.be/699ionfzzVM> - Model interpretations of Deaf-Hearing team
- <https://youtu.be/dKBYwkPX5d8> - Explanation of issues with family law by a Deaf advocate
- <https://youtu.be/I00YfmnsHVo> - Discussion of how to file an ADA complaint
- <https://youtu.be/-7u6u3aKM4> - Discussion of problems using VRI interpreting in the hospital setting
- <https://youtu.be/rAoaE-URJwY> - Discussion of the legal ramifications of Federal Court Decision on interpreters
- https://youtu.be/RM_tBDKuK0o - Disability law podcast
- https://youtu.be/iDyHagGt_ns - Discussion of voter restrictions in Wisconsin

- https://youtu.be/AaU_9RITvFs - Discussion of marriage and divorce from Canada (not current in terms of same-sex marriage)
- <https://youtu.be/VPUqxyk6k4U> - Discussion on fair housing
- <https://youtu.be/ikl5vhv3lcY> - Presentation on alternative dispute resolution and family law
- <https://youtu.be/zPCngfGI9WA> - Presentation on criminal and family law
- <https://youtu.be/4LBjjS9ABnA> - Explanation of a Deaf woman's interpreting problems at the hospital
- <https://youtu.be/MWZ7XWqyTTg> - Discussion of end of life directives