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Doing 'understanding' in dialogue interpreting: Advancing theory and method

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Abstract
This paper asks what 'understanding' looks like in the presence of an interpreter. Much investigation of understanding in Interpreting Studies explores claims which treat it as axiomatic, rather than exploring the occurrence of comprehension itself (how participants come to accept that it is occurring, what form it takes, what its consequences are). Here we re-purpose a well-established research tool – the Map Task – to illustrate a robustly empirical approach to this issue, using complex multimodal and multilingual data. The Map Task, we contend, can play a potentially groundbreaking role in Interpreting Studies, mitigating the constraint created by the uniqueness of each interpreted exchange which otherwise hinders generalisability and theoretical expansion. In particular, we argue that the way interpreters and service users, through their talk, bring themselves *collectively* to points of assumed shared understanding is illuminated with particular clarity through the Map Task lens. Research within this paradigm, we suggest, may help to enable further development of Interpreting Studies, affording an opportunity to deepen our communal understanding of the *collaborative* and *interactive* nature of meaning-making in interpreted exchanges, starting with the recognition that what understanding consists of is, in essence, what interlocutors *treat* as understanding.

Keywords: dialogue Interpreting, sign language, Map Task, interactional analysis, construal, grounding

1. Introduction

Interpreting Studies (IS) can be a difficult subject to research, for at least two reasons. Firstly, interpreting is, by nature, ephemeral: unlike translations, interpretations are usually no sooner articulated than consigned to history, leaving little or no trace for the would-be analyst to examine. Secondly, it is a truism that no two spoken interactions are alike, a feature which acts as a constant handbrake on the generation of interpreting theory: so much is highly context-dependent – *these* people, *this* situation, *this* occasion, and so on. As a result, while the IS literature encompasses a wide range of study-types, analyses focusing on the nature of authentic 'on-task' data remain a challenge.[1]

In our view, paying close attention to how people *actually talk (and respond)* when interpreting and being interpreted strengthens IS scholarship significantly. For what more important question is there in language (or even, in life) than this: 'How *do* we understand each other?'? Interpreting is about nothing if it is not about *doing understanding*, or if it assumes that understanding takes place by the simple expedient of having users of a common language produce and perceive one another's talk. For us, the most fundamental issue in IS is how the prototypical triad of participants *inter-acts* to reach outcomes it considers acceptable and suitable.

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[1] Only five out of 48 studies reviewed in Liu's (2011) bibliometric review of methodology, for example, focus exclusively on non-statistical, qualitative analysis of interpreted talk.

These interests have led to the development of a research programme intended to open up both familiar and new questions by exploiting the attested rigour of an established data-generating tool and set of methodological principles in an innovative way. This research employs a methodological innovation which enables us to augment an interactional paradigm that has played a prominent role in the recent history of interpreting theory. In this paper, we describe our approach, contextualised against a backdrop of prior IS research on the one hand, and prior deployment of the key research methods on the other. Giving a detailed account of the tools and procedures adopted, we exemplify the type of insight that may be generated in this way, in order to provide a point of reference for both our own and others' future presentation of research conducted along these lines.

Our intention, in part, is to facilitate an engagement with close observation in order to re-focus attention on what is being achieved when interaction is mediated by an interpreter – at root, our primary question is: 'How is understanding *being done*?'. In asking this question, we take it as axiomatic that all participants in the 'triadic exchange' (Mason 2001) of an interpreted conversation are active in co-constructing meaning for and with one another. However, we take the view that IS has yet to explain deeply and robustly exactly *how* this collaborative outcome is accomplished. Our approach, we believe, assists us in paying attention to 'mechanisms for being meaningful' because it places the nuts and bolts of real talk squarely into the analytical foreground and invites us to account for them. Theorising should be based on close observation, since only then can we "find things that we couldn't, by imagination, assert were there" (Sacks 1995: 420, lecture 1, Fall 1971). If IS wishes to focus upon the process of engineering understanding, then its practitioners will need to recognise that, as John Local (1996: 178) claims, "only by conducting tightly organised micro-analyses of talk can we hope to come to a proper understanding of the general architecture and functioning of speech in interaction". We contend that such an account of interpreter-mediated talk will be assisted by the means described below.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2 we discuss relevant literature, seeking to connect traditions from IS and Sociolinguistics; in section 3 we provide a justification for and details of our approach to data collection; section 4 offers analyses of data samples to illustrate the type of insights to be gleaned from this approach; and in section 5 we conclude.

2. Models and methods

2.1 *Dialogue Interpreting Studies*

Interpreting Studies experienced a significant period of evolution in the early 1990s: Cynthia Roy disseminated the outcomes of doctoral research (Roy 1989) on face-to-face American Sign Language interpreting (SLI), whilst Cecilia Wadensjö was completing a doctorate (Wadensjö 1992) probing Swedish–Russian interpreting in non-conference settings such as police and immigration hearings, and Susan Berk-Seligson was producing an influential account of Spanish–English interpreting in the US judicial system (Berk-Seligson 1990). Pöchhacker (2004) settles on 'dialogue interpreting' (DI) as a descriptor to characterise this new paradigm. Whilst previous analysts knew interpreting to be a matter of attempting to communicate *between persons*, the process was often construed as centring upon *individual* cognitive effort and a concomitant assumption of responsibility on the interpreter's part to orchestrate mutually acceptable understanding on the part of the Primary Participants (PPs).

The DI researchers, by contrast, fastened their attention upon interpreting as a *social* process. As Wadensjö (1995: 114, emphasis in the original) summarises:

> the social interactionistic model is *dialogical*. According to this model, meaning is conceptualized as co-constructed *between* speaker and hearer(s) *in interaction*. Meanings can thus not be described entirely in terms of individuals' intentions.

Critical to these authors is thus the idea of meaning as *co-production* or *co-construction* (also taken forward by Baraldi & Gavioli 2012; Turner 1995, 2005; Turner & Brown 2001; Wilcox & Shaffer 2005 and others), residing in specific moments in specific interactions. DI research has thus reinforced the departure urged by Ian Mason (2001) from the measurement of 'interpreter error' and sterile concern with 'correctness', 'equivalence' and naïve source-to-target text contrast. This mode of enquiry has sought to account more or less micro-analytically for participant moves and interactional effects, with the emphasis firmly on *descriptive* points of departure.

This body of work sets out with the notion that one must interrogate naturally-occurring dialogue in order to observe naturally-occurring phenomena, investigating language with an eye to the evidence of participants' own readings of the ongoing discourse, and arriving at what Dell Hymes (1962) described as an 'ethnography of speaking'. Amongst the resulting hurdles is the ever-present challenge known (by Labov 1972: 209) as the Observer's Paradox: "the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation". The sheer logistical complexity of 'being in the right place at the right time' to capture audio- or video-recordings in the field cannot be underestimated.

2.2 *Sign Language Interpreting Studies*

The SLI field in general was a relatively early adopter of notions about dialogic models of interpreting. Though programmatic overviews of how and why science might inform the world of sign language interpreter (Tweney & Hoemann 1976; Ingram 1978) helped to define what, in principle, could be done through research and to what effect, early studies (Brasel et al. 1974; Cokely 1985; Hurwitz 1980; Kyle et al. 1979; Llewellyn-Jones 1981; Murphy 1976; Murphy & Fleischer 1977; Rudner et al. 1981) clearly had replicated the attention paid in the wider IS field to interpreters 'getting it right' and 'getting it wrong'. However, as researchers explored the features of interpreting in particular social settings and the reasons for differentiation in the *modus operandi* between settings, attention turned towards investigating the *reasons for the choices* sign language interpreters may more or less consciously be making (Dean & Pollard 2001; Harrington & Turner 2001; Napier 2002; Turner 2006). As Nadja Grbić (2007: 39) shows in a revealing bibliometric analysis, descriptive studies of "linguistic structure and discourse analytical approaches … based on empirical research of authentic interpreting material" play an increasingly prominent part in this field, increasing from 1% to 16% of a systematically generated collection of materials between 1970 and 2005.

It is, of course, a constraint on SLI research that, no matter where signed data is being produced, it must, in order to be analysed, be recorded in a visual format. Written symbol-systems have been an important tool to assist fieldwork – with the act of transcription functioning, here as elsewhere, as an integral part of the analytical process (Kelly & Local 1989) – and have been elaborated in several ingenious ways within different research traditions (see Bergman et al. 2001; Orfanidou et al. 2015 for discussion). Nonetheless, there

has never been a viable substitute, in terms of 'high-resolution' data capture, for the use of good quality filmed documentation. It is encouraging to see that the penetration of technological means into IS research as a whole is clearly on the increase (Liu 2011), as is the use of video-recording to assemble multimodal spoken corpora (Adolphs & Carter 2013).

2.3 *Seeing through the lens of Conversation Analysis*

Whilst DI research has clearly benefited from a number of approaches to the analysis of discourse and dialogue, the present project homes in on one of these, which we find especially apt here by virtue of its fine-grained gaze upon the realisation of action through talk. While this is not the place to provide a full account of either the historical background to or the methodological programme that is Conversation Analysis (CA), it is relevant to offer a very brief overview. (For more details on these aspects of CA, see Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Drew & Heritage 2006, 2013; Sacks 1984; Taylor & Cameron 1987, Ch. 6.)

Following Garfinkelian principles (Garfinkel 1967), CA was born out of ethnomethodology. It concerns itself with the study of the techniques that actual participants use in constructing and making sense of actual talk, with the wider goal of explicating the systematic design of social actions. Vital to the CA paradigm is the use of recordings of talk-in-interaction, together with finely detailed orthographic transcriptions of that data, setting it apart from (i) interview methods which utilise reports of behaviour, (ii) experimental methods involving role-play, (iii) observational methods drawing on field notes (and/or pre-coded schedules), and (iv) methods relying on intuitive introspection. Three further criteria, when combined with the above, make CA distinctive.

The first is CA's insistence on *the potential relevance of all things* – in the words of Atkinson & Heritage (1984: 4): "nothing that occurs in interaction can be ruled out, *a priori*, as random, insignificant, or irrelevant". This belief generates a concomitant mandate to scrutinise the data very closely and thoroughly, this being the only way to notice the unpredictable. The second criterion is that CA takes it as a key assumption that all talk is *recipient-designed for the immediately relevant participants* in any particular interaction, where 'recipient design' refers to being "constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (Sacks et al. 1974: 727). The final criterion is the idea that *actors' actions are reflexively accountable* and ordered in sequences of turns. Thus, simply by producing the next turn in a sequence, a participant in conversation publicly demonstrates their own construal of the previous utterance. In the words of Harvey Sacks (1995: 559, lecture 4, Spring 1972):

> there is only one generic place where you need not include information as to which utterance you're intending to relate an utterance to, and that is if you are in next position to an utterance.

This demonstration of 'understanding reached' can be implicitly or explicitly ratified or, if necessary, corrected by the first participant. In conversation analytic terminology this demonstrability is known as the *sequential architecture of intersubjectivity* and, because of this, Talbot Taylor and Deborah Cameron (1987: 107) note that the conversation analyst "does not have to worry about imposing an analysis on the conversational data, for conversation itself wears its (or the participants') own inherent ('emic') analysis 'on its sleeve'".

2.4 *The Map Task: Data generation and epistemology*

Recently, the focus upon methods and research training has been sharpened by a spate of publications both in the IS field (e.g. Gile et al. 2011; Hale & Napier 2013; Nicodemus & Swabey 2011; Winston & Monikowski 2013) and in sign language and Deaf studies (Orfanidou et al. 2015; Young & Temple 2014). This paper describes an approach designed to retain key features drawn from each of the major tributaries charted above (sections 2.1–3). In order to arrive at a corpus of unscripted dialogues which have been designed, digitally recorded, and transcribed to support the study on many levels of spontaneous, interpreted interaction between signers and non-signers, we have experimentally employed the *Map Task* (Brown et al. 1984; see also Anderson et al. 1991). In the original Map Task, designed to elicit natural yet restricted dialogue, speakers are tasked with a problem to solve and must collaborate verbally to produce a single outcome. Two dialogue partners each have a schematic map drawn on a sheet of paper. The task involves one participant describing the pre-drawn route on their map to the other participant, whose map has no marked route. The former's ultimate aim is to get the latter successfully to draw the route onto their map (without participants looking at the other's map).

The early Map Task researchers were interested in the effects on communicative outcomes of features of social context (such as speakers' mutual familiarity) and physical context (e.g. eye contact between speakers), and how these interacted with linguistic realisations (including speakers' use of contrastive stress). Subsequently, the Map Task has been widely used to support the study of spontaneous speech and communication by children (Anderson et al. 1991, 1992, 1994; Doherty-Sneddon & Kent 1996) and adults (Anderson & Boyle 1994; Boyle et al. 1994; Davies 1997; Kowtko 1997; Sotillo 1997). It has seen particular service in exploring the communication of atypical language users, including sleep-deprived soldiers (Bard et al. 1996) and aphasic individuals (Anderson et al. 1997; Beeke et al. 1996; Merrison 2002).

What are the perceived benefits of the Map Task to this range of scholars? After all, this might not be identified as a 'natural' interactive context, in the sense that this kind of activity (describing routes through maps to be re-drawn by others) is not something that often troubles our quotidian lives. Nevertheless, for these authors' purposes, the original task methodology did generate unconstrained dialogues: crucially, the problem-solving complexities of the task meant that interactants became rapidly absorbed in the activity itself, rather than succumbing to any self-consciousness about the ways in which they were *speaking* about the task (hence ameliorating the Observer's Paradox). The reason for using a task of this kind was to be able to manipulate the knowledge states of the interactants – at any point, the nature of the task is such that the researchers are likely to know what information each participant is trying to convey and be able to pinpoint with considerable precision the locus of any potential apparent confusion. One particular advantage of this task, in comparison to similar methodologies (e.g. Clark & Brennan 1991; Clark & Schaefer 1987a; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs 1986; Grosz & Sidner 1986; Schober & Clark 1989), is that there is (as we describe in section 3.1 below) no unique participant who has all the necessary information: there is not an expert or a novice.

In addition to this, the Map Task also generates a concrete record of the relative 'effectiveness' of the conversation. The route drawn during the task concretely evinces the receiver's account of the resultant co-construction. This enables the analyst to see the outcome of perceived misunderstandings that may not be apparent purely through the communication itself. It also has the advantage of being a persistent record that can easily be

revisited alongside the conversation. The route drawn can also be directly compared to the 'ideal' route, enabling comparisons between the outcomes of different dialogues.

2.5 *DI, SLI and the Map Task*

Thus far, we have sought to establish the groundwork for the approach that we are reporting in the present paper. Interpreting Studies has emerged as a discipline that embraces interactional models of performance, and the study of SLI has variously pushed ("the debate over the interpreter's role is most deeply rooted in the field of signed-language interpreting" – Pöchhacker 2012: 45) and been pulled along by the development of these models. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging under-recognised pioneers (such as Bélanger 2004) who have experimented with alternative conceptualisations, analysts in IS as a whole have yet to generate a more robust account of interactional *mutuality* – a mutuality that applies across the triad *as an ensemble* (Turner 2013). For us, this is an absolutely critical step.

But why, one might well ask, would we deploy an experimental, laboratory-based method to pursue this enquiry if we wish to espouse ourselves to a CA framework that canonically demands the interrogation of non-experimental, everyday talk? This is an important challenge, to which our response is as follows. It is a mistake to consider talk-exchanges that take place in a lab setting to be 'unreal' merely because of the environment in which they occur. Our position aligns with that of Nessa Wolfson (1976), who long ago made a compelling case that any interaction is 'real' for the situation in which it occurs. There is no context of interaction that has a monopoly on claims to produce 'real' communication. In this situation, the research participants knowingly engage in an experimental task: their speech and signing are entirely, unimpeachably authentic for these circumstances, arising from conducting an actual task, and they are not engaged in any form of pretence (cf. Clark 1996 on 'layering'). We consider this critically different from data arising through artificially-derived exchanges such as those presented in Berk-Seligson's mock courtrooms (1990) or Metzger's mock medical examinations (1999), as valid as these may be for their intended (different) purposes. The incompatibility of CA with such mock settings is that the interaction generated would have to be taken to represent something it is not (i.e., not a situation with actual legal or medical consequences): it would feature people pretending to engage in a certain type of interaction. The Map Task does not do this: the resulting data is *sui generis* and, representing only itself, is true to its situation.

Using the Map Task for our purposes (Merrison & Turner, in prep.), then, enables and indeed assists us to bring into focus the aspects of interpreter-mediated talk in which we are most interested. We present details of the *modus operandi* below. The issue of the control afforded to the researcher by the Map Task is particularly significant when recordings of unprompted DI-mediated exchange are so hard to collect and their contents so unpredictable. Minimising such hazards can be highly beneficial. In addition, the nature of the Map Task generates helpful limits to the focus of the activity: we can know with considerable confidence what will be discussed (even being able to predict the occurrence of particular lexical items). The analyst can readily see what is on participants' interactional horizon. Likewise, in retrospect, the linear trace left by the map-producer becomes part of the recorded data that can be explored.

Ultimately, we consider the Map Task a functional device to help uncover the 'machinery' of interpreted talk. The task evokes talk-actions and enables us to watch how they are enacted. In the end, it is the machinery of linguistic interaction that the analyst seeks to comprehend. One

might (following Drew 2009) draw a comparison with the machinery of a bicycle: we are not, in practice, concerned with where the bicycle might go or what the cyclist does on arrival: for us, it is all about *how* the bicycle enables the journey to unfold. The Map Task may generate experimental 'journeys', rather than leading to destinations that achieve everyday interactional ends (the purchase of a box of eggs; the making of a soufflé; inviting friends to dinner; etc), but as analysts we are nonetheless able to conduct revealing studies of *the vehicle and how it moves*. To be sure, we do not fondly imagine that the uttering and perceiving of words (the turning of the pedals) automatically generates shared *understanding*: meaning is, when all is said and done, radically individuated. But human history depends fundamentally upon our belief that meaning *can be mutualised*: somehow, in our talking (and listening, signing and watching), we assure one another that we are co-attuned and comprehend. For us, the present project, pursued as we here describe, generates the possibility of investigating this very attunement.

3. Applying the Map Task to dialogue interpreting

3.1 *How does the Map Task work?*

The methodology used to elicit the dialogue analysed here is based on the Map Task design used by Anderson et al. (1991). In its original form, there were two hearing participants – one designated as the Information Giver (G), and the other designated as the Information Follower (F). They were each given a map, ostensibly of the same fictional location, drawn on an A3 sheet of paper (see Figures 1a and 1b); but the maps were not identical in all particulars. G's map had a route marked around a number of small named pictures (known as *features* or *landmarks*), but not all of these were on both maps.

The reason for the existence of these feature-mismatches is to create a genuine information gap between the participants. It is F's job to draw this route onto their own map. Of the features on each map, most are shared but three (i.e., a total of six) are unshared. As all of these features are route-relevant, the interactants must engage in information exchange if they are to complete the task successfully. *This is the key to the value of the task* as an analytical device – for us, it is primarily *not* the 'success' of the information transmission that is of interest, but the texture and detail of the dialogue generated by the participants as they attempt to complete the task.

In the original studies, the participants sat at a table with a low-level barrier between them so that, while each could see the other, the maps were only visible to their owners. The table also ensured a reasonable, and fairly constant, distance between G and F. They were asked not to make gestures (particularly deictic ones), as the analysis was largely restricted to spoken language and gaze. The instructions given to the speakers informed them that their partner had a map drawn by another explorer, which might therefore be different to their own map. They were also told that the route drawn on G's map was the only 'safe' one, and that he or she should try (bearing in mind, as they were informed, that they were under no time pressure) to ensure that the route drawn by F was as accurate as possible without resorting to showing their map. The instructions were intended to suggest that there may be some differences between the maps (albeit without indicating the type, or the extent, of the differences involved), and also to encourage the participants to become involved in the negotiation process necessary for an accurate route to be drawn.

To exemplify, Figure 1a and Figure 1b show a sample pair of Giver and Follower maps: in total, there are six 'problem' points to be discovered en route. In this pair of maps, the three G-specific landmarks are *tribal settlement*, *pelicans* and *golden beach* (the one in the top left hand corner of the map); the F-specific features are *machete*, *crevasse* and *submerged rocks*.

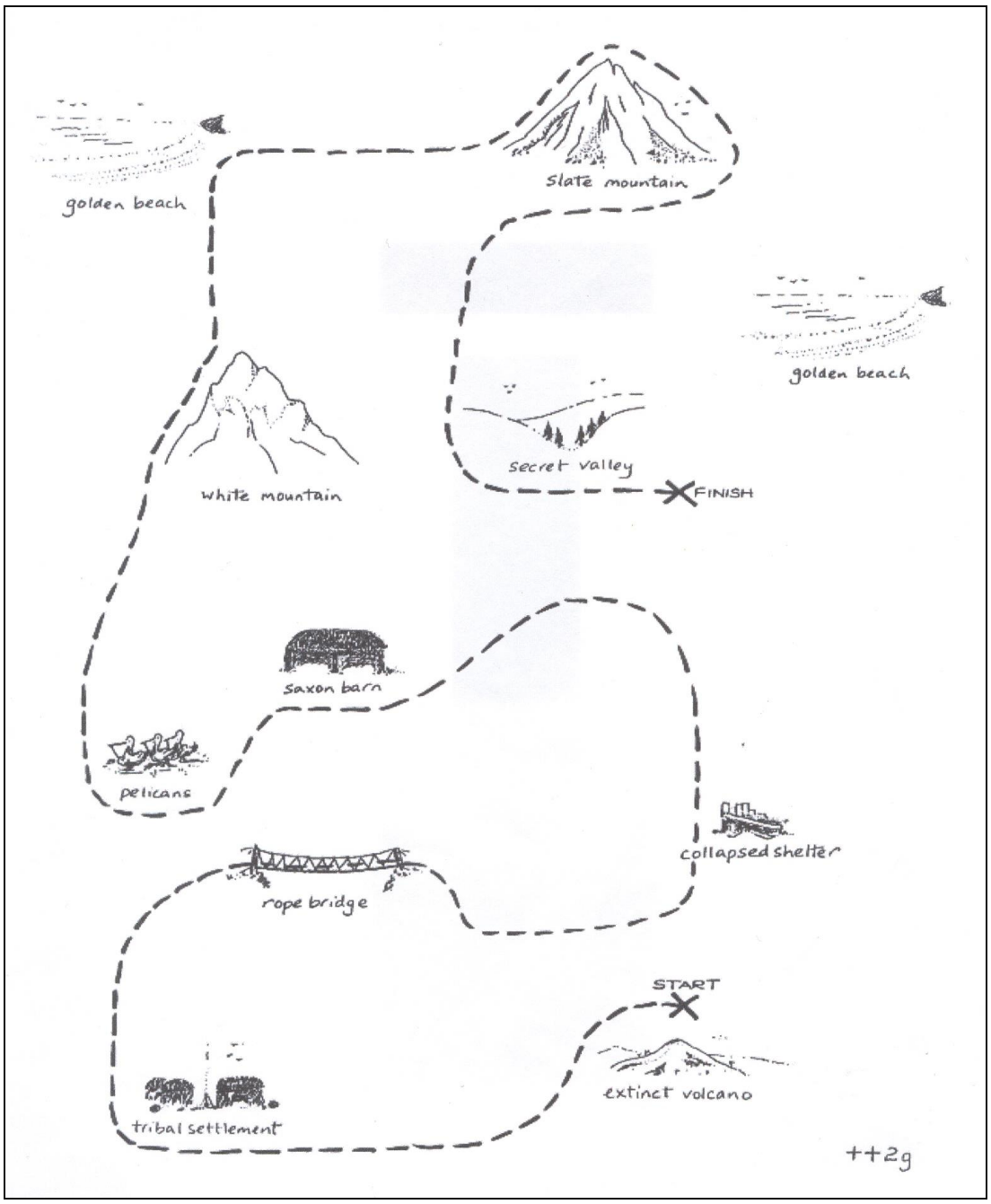

Figure 1a. Giver's Map

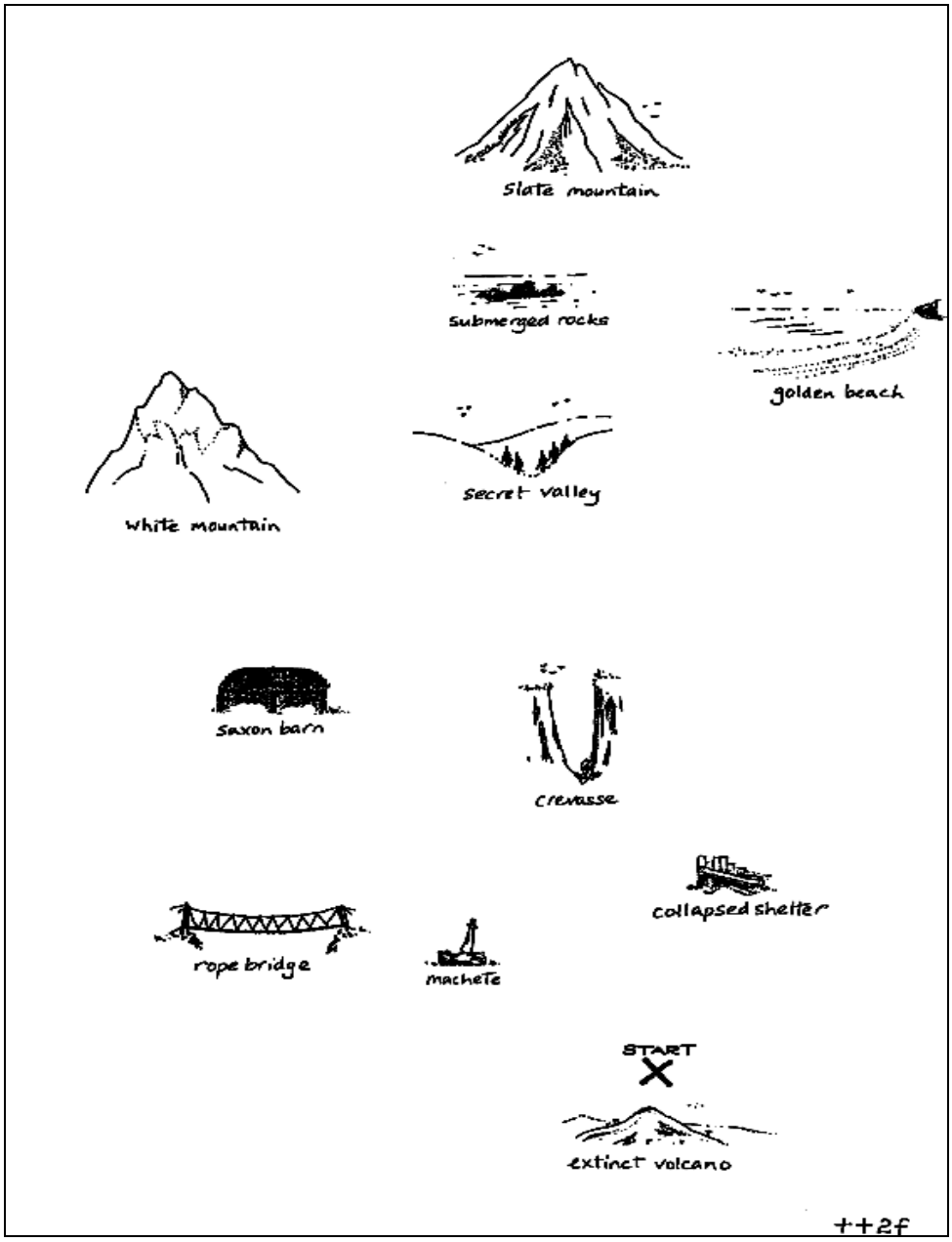

Figure 1b. Follower's Map

In order to use this method to research interpreted interactions between Deaf and hearing participants, some adaptations were made. The most important, of course, was the addition of an interpreter, thus making this a triadic rather than dyadic communicative event. Whilst all hearing PPs spoke English for this activity, all Deaf PPs used British Sign Language (BSL) throughout. We take it as accepted that BSL is a full, natural language (see Sutton Spence & Woll 1999) along with other national signed languages (Johnston & Schembri 2007; Valli & Lucas 2000), with all of the functionality this entails. The interpreter used BSL to convey the hearing participant's utterances to the Deaf person, and English in return to convey the responses. This particular Map Task arrangement therefore afforded the opportunity to reveal findings about interpreting *per se*, and potentially about the combination of languages and

modalities deployed in this specific context. Clearly, the standard Map Task restriction on gestures would have been problematic in this instance and it was removed for all participants.

We also had to make a decision with respect to the relative locations of the participants to one another, and in particular the siting of the interpreter (I). As both G and F were being filmed, the procedure was trialled with the interpreter seated next to G in order that all visual material could be recorded using two cameras. This meant that, in the pilot recording, the interpreter had access to G's map. However, this arrangement was inappropriate for comfortable interaction between the Deaf Giver and the interpreter (e.g. direct eye-gaze between the two was hard to establish when they sat almost side-by-side), and so the full data-set was recorded with three cameras and the interpreter located at the far side of the table, mid-way between G and F (see Figure 2). We took a decision for this data-set to give the interpreter no map; arguably, this was unrepresentative of many real scenarios where interpreters *do* have ready access to materials (e.g. papers tabled at meetings), but we felt that it was in the spirit of the map task rationale tacitly to invite the interpreter to *interact* with the PPs in order to take a position on their intentions. (Future work of course allows for the possible exploration of this variable: for example, what effect is created when the interpreter can see G's map, F's map, or neither of the two?)

3.2 *Data-generation arrangements*

For the present study, all recordings were made at Central College in Glasgow, Scotland in the area from which all participants hailed. Six adult women participated in the recorded dialogues. The two Deaf participants are well known to one another as members of the Glaswegian Deaf community. Two interpreters were involved, both fully qualified within the prevailing national system, one of whom is the hearing daughter of Deaf parents. The two other hearing participants had no experience or knowledge of BSL. None of the participants had previously encountered the Map Task; both Deaf people had some experience of being filmed for other purposes.

The two primary participants (i.e., the non-interpreters in this study) were seated facing each other at opposite ends of a rectangular table in a recording studio.

Three video cameras were set up, one trained on each participant. It was necessary to ensure that the camera view of each participant was close enough to capture the signing in detail, but with enough breadth to ensure that the signers' hands never moved out of shot when signing. To better view the signing it was also essential that the camera view was effectively face-on to the participant rather than at a side angle. Figure 2 represents an aerial view of the arrangement of the participants and cameras.

Before entering the studio, both primary participants (PPs) and the interpreter were briefed about the task procedure by watching instructions in BSL and English, as appropriate, on a DVD recording (to ensure consistency). Once the participants were seated in the studio, the cameras were switched on to recording mode and the conversation began as described above. Because of the low-level barrier between them, the PPs were unable to view each other's maps; whilst the interpreter could see the sheets of paper on which both maps were drawn, she was seated at a sufficient distance from them to be unable to perceive image details or any legible text. Prior to filming, both maps were placed face down on the table.

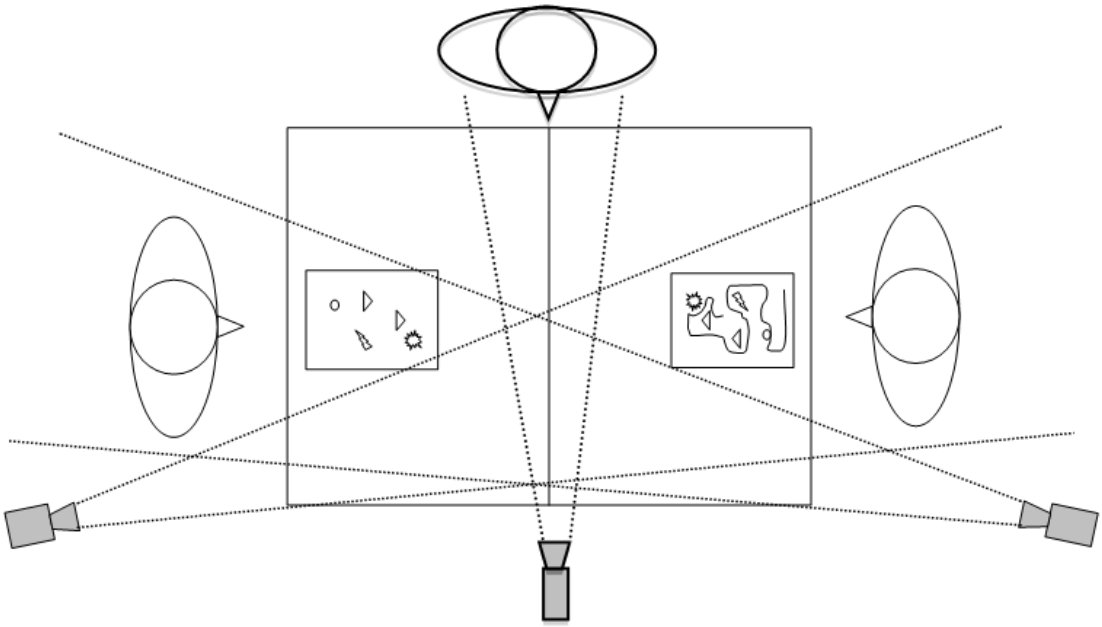

Figure 2. Arrangement of participants during recordings

In this study, data were collected from the Deaf and hearing interpreter-mediated triad. A group of four PPs was involved and a schedule devised whereby the participants worked in different pairings and experienced involvement, both as G and as F for each map route.

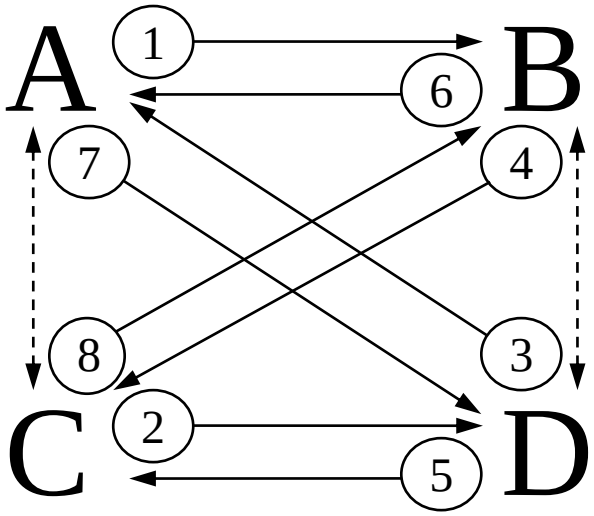

Figure 3. Pairing combinations of primary participants

Scheduling involved the use of a Latin square system (see Figure 3), to avoid any repeat of the same G–F dyad. The total number of interactions was eight. The ringed numbers indicate the order in which the interactions were scheduled. The design for the interpreter-mediated triad was tailored specifically to avoid having participants who use the same language meet in any of the interactions (hence the dotted lines representing no dialogues between A&C and

B&D). Each person was filmed four times. In these triads, each BSL user was accompanied by the same interpreter throughout. Each PP acted as giver for the same map route twice, thus making it possible to explore learning effects (for both PPs and interpreters). Each PP also acted as follower twice, but followed a different map each time. The resulting data set comprises eight dialogues, totalling 101 minutes of interaction. The length of dialogues ranges from approximately 7 to 30 minutes, with a mean dialogue duration of 12 minutes and 35 seconds. At the end of each dialogue, a completed map was collected from F with a route now added (see, for instance, Figure 4).

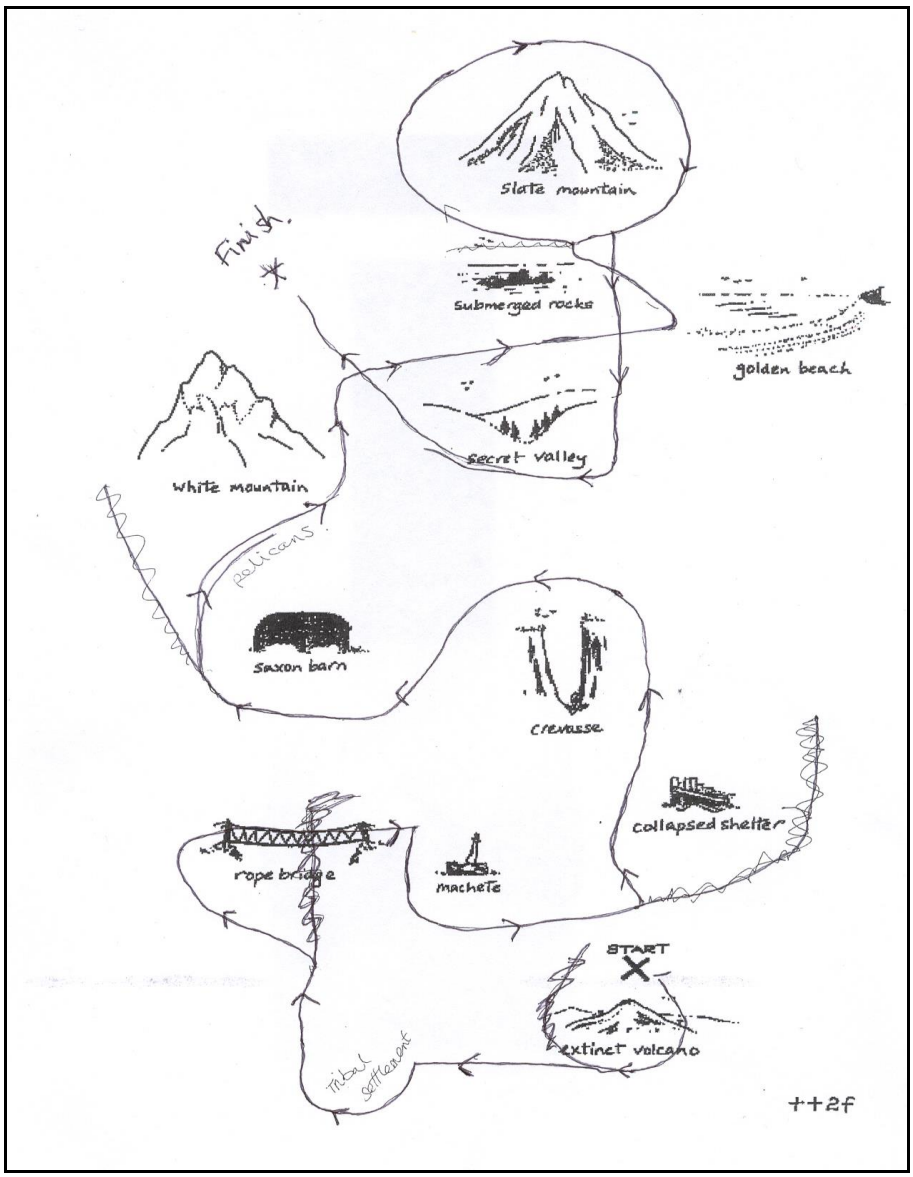

Figure 4. Sample of a follower's completed map

3.3 *Transcription*

As was noted above, if the conversation-analytic benefits of the intended approach to this project are to be maximised, one of the key requirements is the preparation of detailed transcripts which help to reveal the nuanced features of these interactions. Our schooling, in this respect, is ultimately rooted in an (ethno)linguistic tradition traceable to Bronislaw

Malinowski (1922) and reaching us, via J. R. Firth (1957), through the work of Kelly and Local: “an approach that records linguistic events in as much of their complexity as they present to us” (1989: 3), because it seeks to take pains not to pre-judge the significance of any perceptible feature of the data. Recent advances in transcription technology afford some valuable assistance to this general endeavour.

Most relevant to us in the present research has been the opportunity to use ELAN software. ELAN is a freely available linguistic annotation tool, designed for the creation of text annotations for audio and video files that show language in use (Brugman & Russel 2004). The elasticity, internal relationality and user-friendliness of ELAN as a multimodal data-handling platform make it a valuable tool for description in a signed-and-spoken context such as this (Johnston & Crasborn 2006). Of noteworthy benefit is ELAN’s ability to process and make highly visible the time segmentation of a complex multimodal sample.

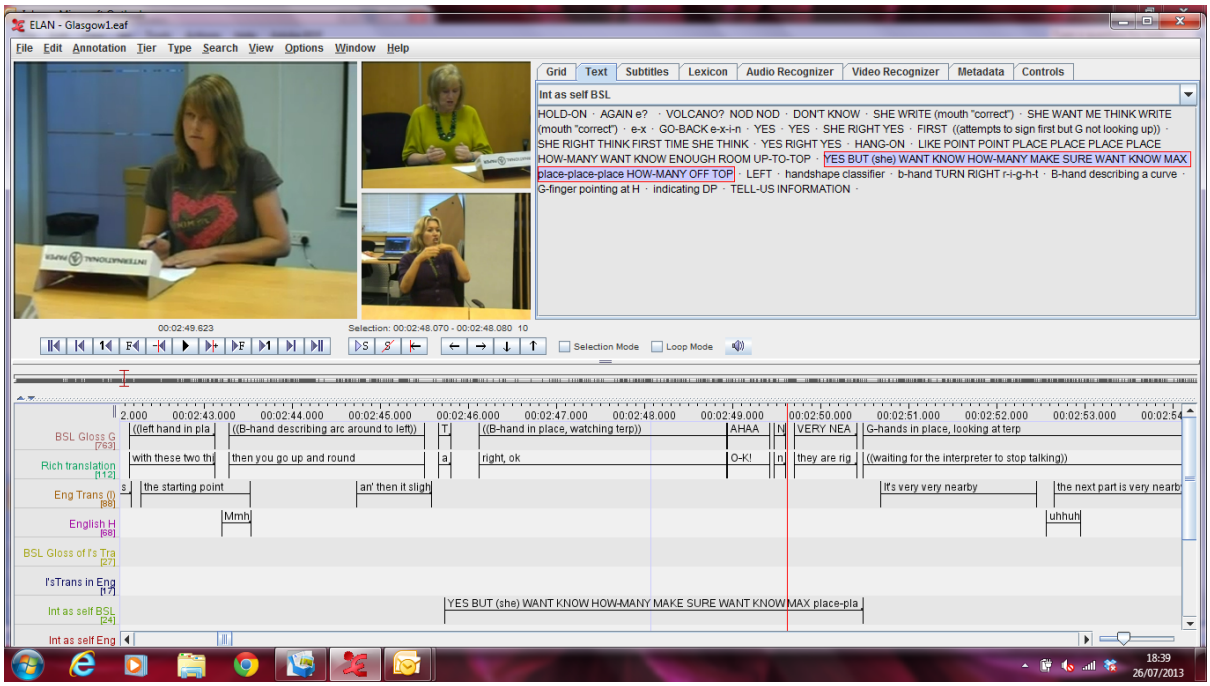

Figure 5. Initial transcription sample using ELAN

4. Outcomes

For us, then, the Map Task facilitates an original and exciting empirical approach to the interpretation of the act of interpretation. As insightful as DI work has grown to be, we are convinced that vital questions remain to be answered. Amongst these, the most fundamental was framed over 20 years ago by Roy (1993): given that we have come to acknowledge the reality of active participation by interpreters, *what is or can be the nature of the interpreter’s co-participation in interaction*? In other words, what is the interpreter doing as a communicating agent, what influence does s/he have on the trajectory of the discourse, and how do participants’ purposes become adequately fulfilled when a third party is co-ordinating the search for mutual understanding in dialogue? We address elsewhere (Merrison & Turner, in prep.), in greater detail, the sociopragmatic insights (in relation to how participants

construe meanings) that we derive from the current application of the Map Task: here, we present an initial indication of the application to Interpreting Studies.

In analysing this material, we draw on the work of Herbert Clark (and colleagues) on issues of collaborative joint action, the historicity of the discourse record, and the ways in which interlocutors signal their understanding to one another. The following section briefly illustrates how Clark's contribution may be brought to life via the vehicle of the Map Task procedure described above.

4.1 *Ground and grounding*

In brief, Clark's perspective is about (i) *doing participating together* and (ii) how that impacts on *doing understanding* (Clark 1996; Clark & Brennan 1991; Clark & Marshall 1981; Clark & Schaefer 1987b, 1989; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs 1986). The central claim in this work is that language use is not just the sum of the individuals doing their respective parts autonomously, but is in fact a *joint action* (which depends upon all participants considering themselves to be acting jointly). Further, for individuals to communicate with each other, they must mutually assume that they hold information *in common* – information which Clark refers to as *common ground* (CG): the sum of our "mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs, and mutual assumptions" (Clark & Brennan 1991: 127).

In relation to common ground, Clark and Schaefer (1989: 260) note that theories of discourse tend to assume the following three basic principles: (i) that participants in discourse presuppose a certain common ground, (ii) that in the process of discourse participants try to add to their common ground, and (iii) that adding to the common ground takes place by virtue of the speaker simply saying the right sentence at the right time. Clark takes issue with this last point, believing that this accumulation needs to be a truly *collaborative* affair – the participants should take not only joint action, but *positive joint action* to see that the content of an utterance is added to the common ground. This process of accumulation is referred to as *grounding* (Clark & Schaefer 1987b, 1989; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs 1986; Wilkes-Gibbs 1986).

Many units of talk are created autonomously by speakers, but *contributing to discourse* is a participatory action created collectively by all participants. Each must believe in the other's active engagement in seeking mutual understanding. Each contributor must present the content of their contribution (because we are not telepathic), and the partner(s) must accept that content. Clark adds that agents doing an action require evidence that they have succeeded at that action, so they will also aim to adopt the *Principle of Joint Closure* whereby "the participants in a joint action try to establish the mutual belief that they have succeeded well enough for current purposes" (Clark 1996: 226). This combined presentation and acceptance (i.e., 'grounding') creates a unit which Clark and colleagues call 'a contribution', divided into two phases (for participants A and B) as follows: the Presentation Phase [Pr], featuring A's initial presentation of content; and the Acceptance Phase [Ac], recording A and B's *mutual acceptance* of that content.

4.2 *Observing grounding*

The Map Task data affords us distinct, 'stage-managed' opportunities to observe grounding in action because the structured task of offering information, deciding upon an account of this new input, and recording that account visibly upon the map demands frequent attempts to ground by the members of our triad. Each part of this process is, crucially, rendered highly

visible by the very nature of the task itself. In Extract 1, we provide (simplified) examples of grounding as seen in one sequence of presentation and acceptance phases from a recording featuring an Interpreter ('Izzy') with a Deaf Giver ('Gail') and hearing Follower ('Fiona'). (The maps relevant to this task are those shown earlier in Figures 1 and 4.) Each of three presentations of substantial, information-rich instruction (Pr#1, Pr#2, Pr#3) is followed by a verbal or non-verbal demonstration of ostensible understanding by F (Ac#1, Ac#2, Ac#3), after which the dialogue moves on with a new presentation phase (Pr#4)**.**

Extract 1[2]

Pr#1

94 Izzy[3]: You go o:ver the rope bridge,

Ac#1

95 Fiona: Yep ((*nods with eye-gaze at G*))

Pr#2

96 Izzy: Swing [around on the rope ↑bridge↑]

Ac#2

97 Fiona: [((*F smiles at G*))]=
98 =heh heh heh heh heh

Pr#3

99 Izzy: ☺>.hhh< A::n::d☺ er:::m (0.4) °°hope-fully
100 don't get too >frightened of falling off<°°
101 go [over the rope bridge],

Ac#3

102 Fiona: [((*nods with eye-gaze at G*))]

Pr#4

103 Izzy: (0.4) then you go dow:n (0.6) and then
104 >round a corner< to the lefffft

Clark (1996: 224, original italics) maintains that, in principle: "Agents consider an action complete *just as soon as* they have evidence sufficient for current purposes that it is complete". (This he calls the *Principle of Opportunistic Closure*.) In Extract 1, Fiona (our pseudonym for the Follower) provides through her nods and short replies exactly the kind of sufficient-for-current-purposes evidence that is required, enabling Gail (the Giver) to forge ahead with her information-imparting strategy.

Of course, it is also possible that Fiona does *not* immediately understand Gail's presentation (accessed via Izzy, the Interpreter). Uncertainties of understanding are, for our purposes, potentially more revealing in both communicative and analytical terms. Again, the Map Task format enables us to identify moments of uncertainty with micro-analytical and multimodal precision, pinpointing the moment when uncertainty is triggered, made manifest and – if a resolution is engineered – resolved. The route-plotting exercise permits the analyst to see clearly (Figure 6) how Fiona chooses to represent her account of Gail's intentions.

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2 Basic transcription conventions can be found in the appendix.

3 Although these words are being uttered in English by the Interpreter (I), her task inherently involves the animation of utterances originally authored in BSL by G.

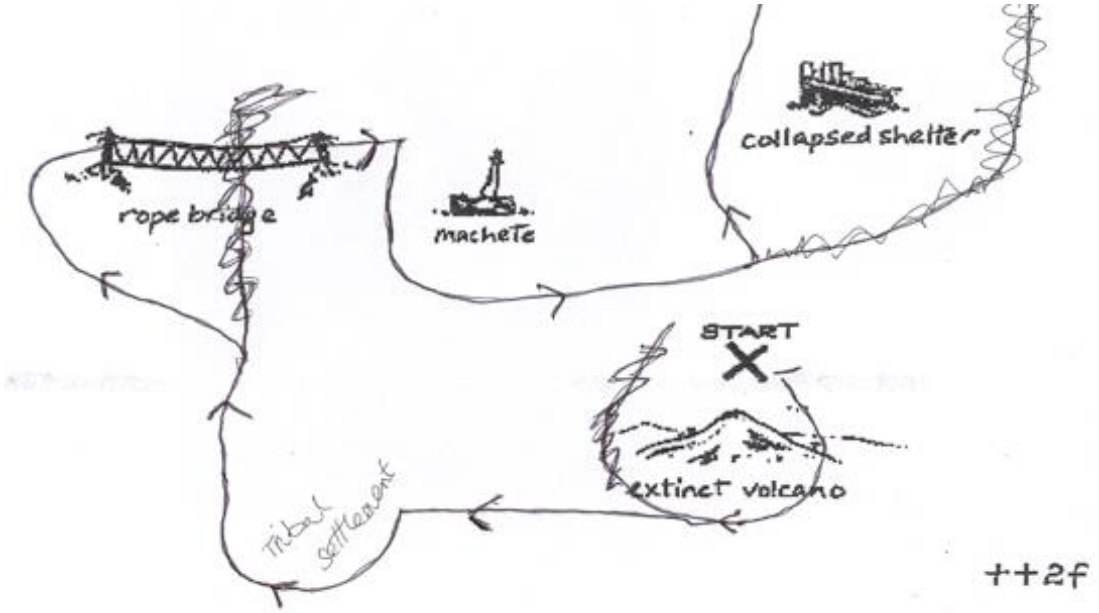

Figure 6. "You go o:ver the rope bridge"

Clark's theories have had a considerable influence on our thinking – notably, his assumptions that language use is a collaborative affair involving joint action, that the accumulation of common ground is an active process, that interactants expect positive evidence to indicate the degree to which they have been understood, and that such evidence of understanding is organised according to a well defined and limited system. The value of this line of enquiry seems to us readily apparent.

4.3 A second glance

It is illuminating, however, to review the above data fragment within a slightly enlarged context. The lines above form the final section (lines 94-104) of the following longer extract.

Extract 2

```
60   I:   =(.) an' then round (0.8) the tribal settlement.
          You turn right (1.0) an' you go round the tribal s-
62        so the tribal settlement is to your right (.) okay?=
     F:   =((nods)) Yea (.)
64        so [now I]'m (.) opposite the rope bridge.
     I:      [yep]
66   G:      [((eyebrow raise [thumbs up] =ok? at F))]
          (3.0)
68   I:   Yes the rope bridge is what comes next.
          When you say opposite,
70        (.)
     F:   Fa[cing]
```

72 I: [I do]n't think so you're just before it.
(6.0)
74 I: What you- (0.2) d- yes y'a'tch'ly go over the rope
bridge but y'a'tch'ly before that you kind of come
76 round a corner (0.8) so you're kind'v (.) you're
swinging round to the right and as you swing round
78 to the right again (.) you go over the rope bridge.
(0.4)
80 F: Okay.=((*I gives 'thumbs up' and mouthes "ok?" to G, who does not acknowledge*))
(2.0)
82 I: So: y- you're not (.) kind'v opposite y'kinda like
come round a bend t'the right (.) and (.) after
84 you've come round that bend you then go straight
over the rope bridge.
86 F: Okay. ((*I does big thumbs up to G, receipted with eyebrow raise and a nod*))
(1.0) ((*F nods to G*))
88 I: Okay so y'over, (2.0) so y've come round the
corner by the tribal settlement, (2.4) up and then
90 round to the right (0.8) ☺a:nd there's this rope
brid[ge (.) okay☺] ((*nods*))
92 F: [((*F nods with eye-gaze at G*))]
(0.4)
94 I: You go over the rope bridge,
F: Yep ((*nods with eye-gaze at G*))
96 I: Swing [around on the rope ↑bridge↑]
F: [((*F smiles at G*))]=
98 =heh heh heh heh heh
I: ☺>.hhh< A::n::d☺ er:::m (0.4) °°hope-fully
100 don't get too >frightened of falling off<°°
go [over the rope bridge],
102 F: [((*nods with eye-gaze at G*))]
I: (0.4) then you go dow:n (0.6) and then
104 >round a corner< to the lefffft (0.8)

Once again, G's signs are represented here only by their interpretation into English by the Interpreter (which is sufficient for this particular discussion). G (Gail) has just begun an account of how one leaves the extinct volcano in the lower right corner of the map (visible on both maps; see Figure 7 below for comparison) and should travel clockwise around the tribal settlement (in the lower left corner) in order to approach the rope bridge from the end furthest from the volcano. F (Fiona) has no tribal settlement on her map: she is therefore trying to ascertain where it should be, and from what direction she should, as a result, approach the rope bridge.

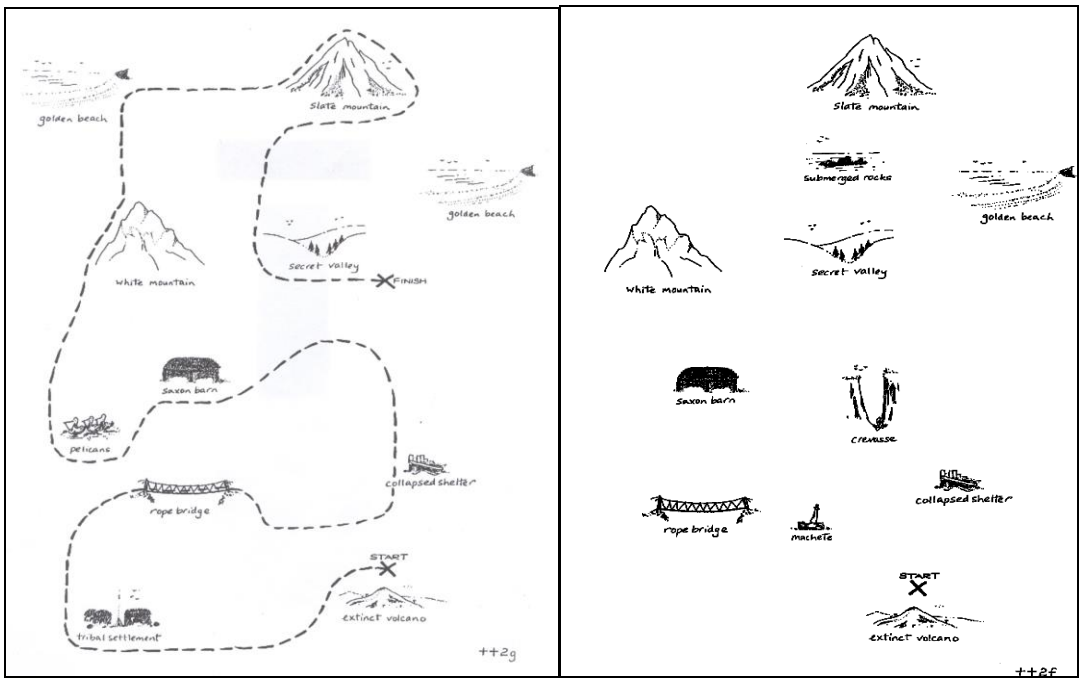

Figure 7. "When you say opposite …"

Fiona's difficulties are, it transpires, somewhat compounded by her choice of lexis: she suggests (line 64) that, on departure from the tribal settlement, she takes her position to be "opposite" the rope bridge. A bridge, however, is not an object with the kind of structure that readily lends itself to a position of 'oppositeness': either Gail or the Interpreter (Izzy) or both therefore struggle to grasp and then reformulate the intention, as indicated for instance in line 82 ("you're not (.) kind'v opposite"). What ensues is thus an extended negotiation, during which the participants seek to 'ground' their perspectives by finding a mutually satisfactory alignment which they can collectively take as satisfactory for their current purposes. Were the Interpreter assumed to be the 'communication manager' in this situation (as highlighted in section 2b above), that would put the onus on her to orchestrate a re-establishment of the PPs' co-orientation. Here, however, we see Izzy twice (lines 80 and 86) trying to indicate that common ground has been recovered in such a way that the description of the route can safely continue:

80 F: Okay.=((*I gives 'thumbs up' and mouthes "ok?" to G, who does not acknowledge*))
(2.0)

86 F: Okay. ((*I does big thumbs up to G, receipted with eyebrow raise and a nod*))

In the first instance, Izzy raises the thumb of one fist towards Gail: as a BSL sign, this is usually considered to mean 'good', but also serves – as here – to signal an 'all clear' message (i.e., that everyone shares an orientation to the matter in hand, and 'we're free to progress'). The signal is tentative, to the extent that Izzy also mouthes "OK?", inviting Gail to agree that it is appropriate to continue. Gail does not acknowledge the invitation, however. In line 86, Izzy produces a more elaborate version of the marker, which is this time acknowledged with raised eyebrows and a nod by Gail.

And here is where we believe the present mode of research to offer the greatest value, because *on neither of these two occasions* does Gail accede to Izzy's indications of readiness to move on with the task. The Interpreter is not occupying a managerial role in this part of the interaction: it is not, evidently (as seen by Gail's non-orientation to Izzy's utterance), the Interpreter's role to decide when messages have been adequately conveyed. What we in fact see is that the responsibility for negotiating 'grounding' here is distributed throughout the triad – in other words, the triad is not operating as a simple dyad pivoting on the Interpreter as its central point, but as a *genuinely collaborative threesome*. The Interpreter is co-constructing meaning and nurturing intersubjectivity with both PPs but, as Terry Janzen and Barbara Shaffer have aptly noted, "she must recognize that the primary participants are doing the same with each other despite the fact that their discourse is mediated by an interpreter, and part of her task is to attempt to let that relationship develop unimpeded" (2013: 78). It is precisely the design of the Map Task, with its multiple opportunities for the analyst to observe the grounding process, which has enabled us to illuminate and explore at close quarters the implications of this interactive practice.

As the exchange continues, then, it transpires that the PPs look *directly to one another*, in addition to the interpreter, for indications that they have found a place of mutual alignment. Gail (via Izzy) rephrases her explanation (lines 88-91) of the route from tribal settlement to rope bridge and, in line 92, receives a direct indication of reception from Fiona ("*nods with eye-gaze at G*"). The description continues, taking us over the bridge (with Fiona, in line 95, still nodding whilst maintaining eye-gaze on Gail). Finally, in a display of mutual confidence that an alignment has been achieved, we see smiles and laughter emerging as a way of underlining shared satisfaction at the outcome: Gail initiates a playful 'swinging' on the rope bridge, received with audible and visible confirmation by Fiona (lines 97-8) and with Izzy taking up the joke in her voiced interpretation (lines 99-100). Fiona gives a final visual signal, with her eye-gaze firmly on Gail again, in line 102 – and this complex section of the map has been successfully navigated. Fiona's drawn map (Figure 6 above) clearly displays both the initial uncertainty (cf the crossed-out vertical line bisecting the rope bridge) and the final outcome in the form of her corrected representation.

5. Conclusions and future analyses

The purpose of this paper has been to introduce the Map Task as a resource with a role to play in breaking new ground in Interpreting Studies. It will readily be apparent to scholars and teachers in the field that its use need not be confined to the research arena. The Map Task has real potential as a device to assist interpreting practitioners as part of the learning process: it can give very direct and functional feedback to a student upon what worked and what did not work in their interpretation. The users of interpreters' services may also find it revealing to be able to observe directly the outcomes of mediated communication in the form of drawn maps and accompanying transcripts: too often, service-users receive very little direct evidence of interpreters' output and its consequences. Furthermore, for the interpreter in the field, the opportunity to engage in structured reflection is often rare and therefore highly prized: the Map Task can facilitate exactly such reflection, holding up a revealing but non-judgmental mirror to the interpreting performance. However, in the terms of the current paper, it is the epistemological value of this form of enquiry that is most pertinent.

Researchers including Pöchhacker (2004) and Shlesinger (2009) have called for both greater rigour and interactionally-informed analyses of communicative processes, and the Map Task

offers such an extension to the IS armoury, bringing four key features into play. Firstly, the 'experimentally engineered' nature of the talk-exchanges being recorded affords the researcher a degree of laboratory control over the interaction (including participant pre-consent); this can be rendered unobtrusive, but at the same time permits forms of preparation, intervention, deliberate design (e.g. the inclusion of depictions designed to elicit specific lexemes) and structured post-hoc reflection which are, at best, rare in other IS contexts of study. Secondly, this empirical mode of enquiry creates scope for repetition within the analytical process, facilitating replicability which is all but impossible otherwise: participants can repeat this task entirely or with controlled adjustments in task detail, personnel or data-gathering procedures. Thirdly, unlike the data produced in role-played situations, the Map Task generates interactions which constitute authentic exemplars of task-oriented dialogue. Finally, the Map Task is designed both to create *and to display* a record of its own arc of construal. Each participant is operationally led towards explicitation of expression, with the resulting account (as perceived by the Follower) being committed to a visible record in the form of the final map-product. In the final analysis, therefore, it is possible not only to see what was uttered, but to track the formation (or otherwise) of common ground through the *effect* of key utterances on the recipient's understanding. As we have suggested through the example above, the task-based nature of this type of enquiry presents a novel, revealing and progressive opportunity to deepen and extend our understanding of some aspects of interpreting as it unfolds. In particular, we argue that the way in which interpreters and service users, through their talk, bring themselves *collectively* to points of assumed shared understanding (i.e., achieve 'grounding', in Clarkian terms) is helpfully illuminated through the Map Task lens.

As ever, legitimate questions arise about the confidence with which we might fairly make these claims. Our choice has been to work with BSL users and interpreters, but perhaps these participants approach the Map Task differently than users of other languages would do. After all, Deaf people might be particularly adept, in cognitive terms, at this highly visual task, or bring some particular experience or perspective to the task which makes them atypical as a study group. The extensive previous use made of the Map Task, with a wide range of other participants, suggests that a possible 'Deaf advantage' is not likely to be a major issue (and, of course, only half of our PPs are Deaf), but this could be tested empirically. Equally, the use of sign language for the task may make the activity different for these participants, and again controlled consideration of this possibility (non-signing participants undertaking this task; signers undertaking a comparable, non-visual exercise) would be appropriate. Finally, it is possible that learning effects may be apparent in the repeated undertaking of the task, and this needs to be kept under review.

What is to be done next in this research? Certainly this paper stands, in part, as an invitation to others to explore the kind of approach we have attempted here, and we have described and accounted for our method in some detail precisely to facilitate uptake by interested colleagues. Through our own current research programme, we believe that there is a four-fold contribution that we may be able to make. Firstly, as this paper suggests, the Map Task models a type of task-based data-generation with potential as an investigative device within our field. To enhance the value of this approach, there are methodological refinements, checks and balances, and extensions that can be made to the existing source material. Furthermore, task-based approaches have been taken in other contexts which may offer alternatives to the highly visual nature of the stimulus material at play in the Map Task: Fujii (2012), for example, prompts dialogue partners to co-construct narratives as a similar means of eliciting spontaneous but managed interaction.

We anticipate, though, that the contribution of this work may be more than methodological. Developing new methods is only of value, after all, if they prompt revelations about practice and theory which could not have been attained by existing means. This work may facilitate further development of DI studies – an extension beyond the scope recently charted for the 'community interpreting' field by Mireia Vargas Urpi (2012). In particular, the Map Task affords the opportunity to deepen our collective understanding of the *collaborative* nature of meaning-making in interpreted interaction – 'How is understanding *being done*?'. We see this as a vital task in IS. In this respect, we strongly align with Michael Cronin's 'negentropic paradigm' (2006) which "highlights the positive consequences of 'imperfect' interpreting on the coordination of the interaction and on the achievement of new forms of participation, sensitivity and empowerment" (Baraldi 2012: 323). Using the Clarkian notion of 'grounding', we find, enables us to shed light not upon how the interpreter's output equates to or deviates from its interactional antecedents, but on how the ensemble invokes significance to carry out 'positive joint actions' (Clark & Schaefer 1989).

The third contribution is to interactional sociolinguistics, given that this research draws upon and, to an extent, tests theories of pragmatics, conversation analysis and discourse analysis. We are interested in exploring how well these ideas stand up in the context of multi-party, interpreted interaction, where normative expectations concerning the progress of dialogue are disrupted, perhaps revealingly, via the intercession of an interpreter. Our data are, by design, both bilingual and multimodal, in the sense that two primary modalities (sign and speech) are at play, whilst also incorporating gestural material, writing and drawing, eye-gaze and body positioning. Whilst sociolinguistics is well aware of these aspects, and research into the interaction of modalities in interpreting has suggested some intriguing avenues (e.g. Mason 2009; Davitti 2012; Pasquandrea 2012; Krystallidou 2013), it is – outside of sign language interpreting studies, of course – as yet rare in IS to exploit the potential of digital video to examine the interaction of modalities.

Lastly, the contribution of the Map Task as an analytical device in this context is to the study of human communication, instantiated here in triadic, interpreter-mediated exchanges. In short, we suggest that – with the distinctive element of the interpreter's mediation to articulate and *display* explicit construals of others' turns at talk – this material offers a revealing insight into the nature of the phenomenon known as 'understanding' (see Merrison & Turner, in prep.). This approach casts fresh attention on the *mutuality* of participants' actions necessary to maintain experiences of communicative adequacy. The paramount outcome here for IS is the refinement of previous accounts of the practitioner's role: since the interpreter alone cannot make comprehension happen, it becomes evident that *without grounding, there is no 'understanding'*. To recognize the co-authorship of the audience is, as Alessandro Duranti (1986: 243) states, "more than an ideological stand. It represents the awareness of a partnership that is necessary for an interaction to be sustained, but is often denied by analysts and participants alike". In everyday talk, including interpreted talk, humans cannot know whether perfect meaning-transfer is occurring: all that we ask is to be satisfied, *sufficiently for our current purposes*, that the available evidence suggests we may move on, confident enough that all involved adequately share an appreciation of what has been meant.

In future analyses, we aim to extend this set of insights through further exploration using the Map Task and the data-set generated. We will look to elaborate the account above, and to broaden the scope of the research with reference to Deaf–Deaf Map Task recordings (see Quinn et al. 2008) and to a wider span of interpreted encounters. In all instances, we will be

seeking to put under the microscope each moment of talk and to ask '*What* are they all 'understanding'?', '*How* are they all doing that 'understanding'?' and 'How do they *agree* that they're doing it?'. Crucially, it is fundamental to our approach that the focus lies equally on each of members of the interactional triad: as Liu (2011: 89) notes, "examining how non-interpreter participants react in an interpreter-mediated interaction can offer new perspectives on human communication" and is "a new direction that interpreting research can take". Ultimately, we believe that research within this paradigm extends current interpretations of interpretation in original and significant ways: it can take us much further than envisaged by Hale & Napier when they consider approaching conversational texts as "one interrelated discourse" (2013: 130), though they underline the importance of enabling analysts to see how "each participant's turn, including the interpreter's, affects the other".

We see this work as permitting analyses to push *beyond* the (necessary but insufficient) received understanding that interpreting takes place through a triadic relationship between the interpreter and the primary participants. Within our sights would be an extension of previous thinking about the integrated functioning of the interpreting triad and the development of forms of professional practice whereby informed participants, conscious of the significance of grounding, might be drawn into "an *active appreciation* of what the interpreter is doing, so that they, too, are consciously active *in the interpretation process itself*" (Turner 2007: 187 – emphasis in original). It is, we claim, possible to explore these ideas through the Map Task lens, starting by accepting that 'understanding' consists of what interlocutors *treat* as understanding: or, as Mikhail Bakhtin put it in 1934-35 (1981: 282), "Understanding and response are dialectally merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other". This study demonstrates that it is possible to take a robustly empirical approach to this issue, even with complex, bilingual and multimodal data.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions[4]

Overlapping turns

[When there is already someone speaking, a single left bracket [marks the start of overlapped talk. The transcripts are formatted so that when overlaps occur, the overlapping contribution is arranged on the page directly below the relevant part of the already on-going contribution.

] The offset (end) of all overlapped contributions is shown by a right bracket at the appropriate points in the turns of both participants.

Latched contributions

= An utterance that immediately follows the preceding utterance without a gap (a latched utterance) is transcribed with a pair of = signs: one at the end of the preceding stretch of talk and one immediately prior to the onset of the latched utterance.

Pauses

(.) A micro pause of less than 0.2 seconds.

(0.0) Longer pauses are timed to the nearest tenth of a second and are put within parentheses. (3.1) therefore represents a silence of 3.1 seconds. Where silences cannot be attributed to a speaker, the pause is marked on its own line.

Characteristics of delivery

> < Talk delivered at a faster rate than surrounding talk is transcribed within angled brackets pointing inwards.

- Indicates the utterance is cut off mid-flow. (In terms of phonetics, this often involves glottal closure.)

: Elongation of the preceding sound. The more colons, the longer the sound.

? Gradual rising intonation. While a ? very often indicates a question, it is important to note that it doesn't necessarily mean that. Traditional punctuation marks are not used for punctuation, but rather intonation.

. Gradual falling intonation. While a . very often indicates a statement, it is important to note that it doesn't necessarily mean that.

, Fall–rise intonation, often (but not always) signalling an unfinished turn-in-progress.

Abnormal volume and pitch

° ° Text surrounded by degree signs is quieter than the surrounding talk. The more degrees there are, the quieter the utterance: °quiet°, °°very quiet°°, °°°exceedingly quiet°°°.

↑ ↑ Notably higher shift in pitch for the text between the upward pointing arrows.

underlining Other emphasis/stress.

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4 This is an abridged version of the conventions in Merrison & Turner, in prep.

Non-verbal activity

.h	Audible inbreath (number of hs corresponds to length of breath).
heh	Syllable of laughter.
☺	Text surrounded by smiley faces is delivered in 'smile voice'.
((nods))	Representations of non-verbal behaviour are transcribed within double parentheses.

Other conventions

odd spelling	Non-conventional spelling is often used to more closely represent the actual pronunciation of words.
line numbers	Transcript lines are numbered in the left hand margin.

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About the authors

Graham H. Turner has been the Director of the Centre for Translation & Interpreting Studies in Scotland at Heriot-Watt University since 2005. His first research assistantship in 1988 centred on the representation of meaning in British Sign Language (BSL), and his subsequent research has focused on language in society, with special reference to Interpreting Studies and to BSL. A former elected Secretary of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, he has published widely, advised bodies including the Scottish Parliament, and edited international periodicals in Sign Linguistics, Deaf Studies and Translation & Interpreting Studies.

Andrew John Merrison is a senior lecturer in Linguistics at York St John University. His research concerns the socio-pragmatics of inter-action and how, in various ways, language is used for getting stuff done. Genuinely preferring collaborative research projects, he has worked on: students' e-mail apologies, requests and complaints to university faculty; face and identity issues online; and the nature (and dangers) of (mis)interpreting intention in Facebook status comments. He co-authored *Introducing Language in Use: a Coursebook* (Routledge, 2005, 2014), co-edited *Language in Use: a Reader* (Routledge, 2010) and with others from the Linguistic Politeness Research Group, co-edited *Discursive Approaches to Politeness and*

Impoliteness (Mouton, 2011) and *Situated Politeness* (Continuum, 2011). (His favourite words are still *minimum* and *outwith*.)