

Gallaudet University
Department of Interpreting and Translation

2017-2018 Colloquium Lecture Series
Dr. Ruth Anna Spooner
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DR. KEITH CAGLE

Hello, everyone. Good morning! Welcome to the second colloquium lecture series. First of all, let's remember today is a federal holiday - Veterans Day. It's supposed to be on November 11, however is it celebrated today and I do want to recognize all of our veterans and thank them for protecting our land. It is a little bit chilly here this morning. She is going to give you a really wonderful presentation so I'm sure all of you will warm up fairly quickly.

Like I mentioned, this is the second Colloquium Lecture Series and it is supported by the Department of Interpretation and Translation. I would like to introduce our faculty. Pam Collins and Lori Whynot, and Paul Harrelson. We also have Steve Collins, Dani Hunt and Brenda Nicodemus with us. So all of these faculty members are involved in this lecture series. We have a doctorate program, a masters of interpretation, and a bachelors in interpretation and we also have areas of these individuals working on research so everyone is working very hard this semester. This Colloquium is supported by our two deans, Dr. Kubby Rashid and Dr. Gaurav Mathur. Dr. Mathur is the Dean of the graduate school and Dr. Rashid is our Dean. Also thanks to our Provost, Dr. Carol Erting, who is supportive of our program. We would like to thank them for all of their support. Today's presentation will be a videotaped and archived. All of our previous presentations are also archived as well and you can watch those series and the past Colloquium presentations via the archives. Finally, I would like to thank our two interpreters, Stephanie Baran and Amanda Mueller. Thank you for coming and interpreting this morning.

I also would like to thank Gallaudet Media Services for helping this Colloquium series. After the presentation, and we are done with our questions and answers, we will have lunch on the second floor of the cafeteria everyone here is welcome to the luncheon and have an opportunity to talk to Ruth Anna. Now I'm happy to introduce Dr. Brenda Nicodemus who is the Director on the Center on the Advancement of Interpretation and Translation Research.

DR. BRENDA NICODEMUS

Thank you, Keith. I really appreciate the introduction. I would just like to briefly make a couple of points. This series includes four lectures. We've had one already with Dr. Patrick Boudreault about translation but on a different topics. In February we will have Dr. Deborah Russell here on February 9th. I'm sure you recognize her name. She has written a lot of legal interpreting, medical interpreting, and educational interpreting and has published quite a bit and is a wonderful person. Please sure don't miss that particular presentation. The last lecture is going to be by one of our own faculty members, Pamela Collins, who will be presenting about her dissertation research, which will be hot off the press.

Today Dr. Spooner will be presenting for approximately 30 to 40 minutes. And then we will invite someone from our English department, Dr. Jennifer Nelson, to moderate some questions and a discussion about her work. And when we are done with that, we will allow for questions with Dr. Spooner, and we also invite you to share your opinion with the group.

I would like to introduce Dr. Ruth Anna Spooner. She showed me her sign name, which is a beautiful sign name. It's very artistic and beautiful. That gives you a sense of her vibe, which is very positive and so you are really in for an entertaining presentation. She recently finished her doctorate degree in a ASL literacy translation at the University of Michigan. She currently is teaching English at RIT in the Department of Liberal Arts within NTID. I had never met Dr. Spooner, but we have known each other for about two years. She submitted a paper for consideration and publishing in a specific journal that I was editing, so we had corresponded in a quite lengthy discussion over the two years and it's a beautiful paper that will be published in March, so we are really looking forward to seeing that. It's been great working with her and her team.

I asked her to tell me a little bit more about herself and she said, "Well, I'm from Idaho, which is a beautiful place and she misses the bright sunny skies, but loves New York as well. So she told me about how she became involved in translation. She wanted to understand better how deaf students can respond and see literacy on paper, in English and wanted to provide translation. As she was looking for that she couldn't find ASL translation for things she wanted to teach in class. So she said I will do it myself and she began delving into translation and began to understand the process of translation and the analysis of it and then just became hooked. So now it's become her dissertation topic.

Another thing I would like to share about Dr. Spooner is she is involved in a project extensive project at RIT, ASL Core, which means they are studying standardization for different disciplines -- signs of different disciplines -- in philosophy, history, science, and establish a database where people can access specific signs and different ways of expressing the specific signs in those areas, which actually corresponds nicely with translation in her research. I do want to share one more thing. We talked a lot about how busy she is and I would like everyone here and I know you are all busy as well to sit

back and relax. Forget your work. Forget your homework for now. Listen to this wonderful presentation by Dr. Ruth Anna Spooner. Welcome.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Hello, everyone. Hello. Thank you so much for coming today. I know as students you have a lot of homework stacking up, tests, exams, deadlines so for you to sacrifice your time to come to a lecture like this I'm really grateful. I did come to talk to you about translation and as Brenda mentioned, I have delved into it and I have quite a bit of thoughts on the subject. So first I want to begin with this quote. Just, this word just, came up again. Just translation. I want to get rid of that word. It's not just translation and I will talk more about why in a moment. People often ask why one would translate with the importance of translation is. We have interpreters and we value our interpreters and love our interpreters and they are quite important but what's the point of translation? Why would one have translation. Why translate? What's the importance behind translation? You are not translators. You might be interpreters and might be students studying the field of science, education, but why translation is important? I thought about this quite a bit and today I will give you some of my thoughts on the subject and hopefully that will help you better understand the importance of translation and why it should be valued and specifically translation in ASL for any of the feels that you may be in.

Often times people ask me what I do for a living and I will respond to them I'm an English teacher and then they freak out thinking that I'm going to be critiquing their English left and right and need to be careful around me is often the joke and I try to put them at ease and tell them I'm off duty when I'm not teaching. I'm not critiquing their English. I have no red pen in hand. So they decide that it's safe to ask me a few more questions about what my research is and what I do. And I talk to them about my research I talk to them about English literature such as stories, poetry, plays. And I translate that into ASL and I use that in the classroom with deaf students. Many of the deaf student struggle with their own literacy. English is a second language and I give them a translation and I look at how that impacts their work and their understanding and their attitudes and their comprehension improves and so I look at what the impact of the translation is and that's basically my research.

And it does have an impact. It certainly does, but people often will respond to that explanation of what I'm doing and they will talk about ASL being translated from English and I can see the expressions time and time again it's one of curiosity and they are a bit perplexed as to why they do it which leaves me wondering, why would that confuse them and why would they be perplexed over my work and translating to ASL and I think these quotes here and these comments will help explain it.

You can see the different comes that come up time and time again. People often will say that they're just ...there is that word again "just" translating it into sign as though it's nothing. I work quite hard of this and they minimize it. Or they will say something along the lines so you are making it more simple, easier for the students to understand? And

other people will say, you really can't do that. You are making it too easy for the students. When they watch ASL they won't read it in English and they aren't going to learn it in English. Again, these comments struck me. You can't translate. That English has different features and that ASL lacks those features. That English has more words and ASL doesn't have the equivalent and therefore you can't translate. And I think about that, why do people say this?

Now, If the person who said this were hearing and they really didn't understand the deaf community, ASL, the Deaf culture. I could maybe understand that, maybe give them a pass. I would take the opportunity to educate them as sweetly as I could but I would understand the comments. These comments, they are not from hearing people. These comments are made by deaf people. Deaf people who grew up native to ASL. Deaf people from Deaf school and mainstream programs and deaf people from deaf families. That's who made these comments. That really surprises me. They clearly value ASL. They see it as their first language and understand it's part of their identity. It's inherent to who they are and at the same time they say things like, well, English and ASL are not equivalent. English more advanced, more complex, it's academic, more from an academic setting. But ASL is the everyday vernacular, it's more simple, it's more to the point. And so these comments when they concern me and I have given thought to them. These comments show an underlying language ideology. If you study linguistics you will see this concept pop up again and again – language ideology. I will talk a little more about that.

What this means is all languages have ideologies. Deep, rooted ideologies. It shows value, attitude, beliefs, expectations, so you have a schema of what a good language looks like, whatever the language is, the proper language, right? You have the schema. So maybe you have a schema for what ASL should look like. Or perhaps you have the schema of what proper English looks like, right? So you have this and we all have it for our own languages. Your family has influenced you, the education system has influenced you, the cultural context and what you grew up has all been introduced to your language ideology. You may not realize it you don't realize this until someone violates schema, the rules, what you understand to be the right type of language. So when they break these rules you make judgments about them and it's easy to do. I will give you a couple of examples.

Say you are in a college setting and someone types this and hands it in. Can you imagine what the instructor would think? There is no way the student would pass. The instructor would probably be cringing. Now you might use this for texting, that's fine. But in the academic world, this is not appropriate English. It's slang. There is no capitalization. There is no punctuation. There is not appropriate for the academic world. So this is not the idea of what English should look like in the academic setting. If someone were to hand this in on a paper, they would think what is wrong with this student? We again, we have these schema, these values, of what academic English looks like and this example does not match it. Let me give you another example.

Now let's say someone were to say this. "I ain't." It seems like slang. And if you go further it's a double negative. "I ain't going to no party" a double negative. That's not permissible in standardized English. So in some dialects we do have variances of English and time dialects this would be appropriate use but again when we hold our schema of what proper English is, this does not match. Someone uses this some judgment being made. Are you a hillbilly? Do you not know how to use English appropriately? We have these values that are subconscious and we don't understand them until someone breaks these rules. That's what language ideology is. Now we also have it when we talk about ASL. Here are a couple of examples.

If someone is signing in an English way with initialized signs. Here are a couple of examples of initialized signs. People might look at them and tell them they need to stop, that's not appropriate. These initialized signs are not ASL. That we need to use pure ASL because some people have the schema of what pure ASL looks like that it's more iconic signing and not initialized signing.

Now in ASL the sign for family is more iconic. Culture is now signed like this. And some people are adamant that's the way it should be signed, no longer using initials. Other people have no problem using the initialized signs and it's been the way their family has signed all along and they don't mind. Their beliefs, attitudes and values and both are fine. We all have different values and beliefs.

When one is voicing and signing at the same time, speaking and signing at the same time, most people and many people I would argue say that you can't do that. You need to keep the two languages separate. Sign, don't try and speak English at the same time. You need to separate the two languages. By there are some people who are fine with it. It doesn't bother them. Other people it's like nails on a chalkboard, right? They want people to stop doing it. They can't stand it. And that's because we all have language ideologies, a schema. And again all languages have that. So the comments that people are making in regards to translation, these comments that I have already shown you, it shows me their ideologies. Again, it shows that language, ideology that is embedded with them that they are comparing English and ASL and seeing a disparity in the two languages. Often times people say it's a waste of time. They will say it's important that student read text in English. They value English more than ASL. Again, every day communication of ASL is fine but not for the academic world. They feel that English is more complex and ASL is more simplified. Again, these comments show their subconscious beliefs. They do not see the two languages on equal footing. They think that ASL is more simplified and less than English and see that in the academic setting as well.

So I want you to remember these concepts. I will circle back to these comments because they are problematic. Before we delve deeper into them, I need to talk about translation. Because I think one way we can shift the discussion, we can change people's paradigm is to really understand translation. But before we get into translation, I need to really clarify the difference between translation and interpreting. Interpreting and

translation have similar processes. We know that. We are taking different languages, different cultures, and mediating the message from one language, one culture, to another, right? So we understand the process that these look similar. But when we talk about interpreting, that's more of a live action. It's people coming together with an interpreter and it's happening simultaneously and you don't have time to analyze the meaning of one versus the other. It's live. It's simultaneous. Done. Translation is the slower process. You might have one or two people coming together and looking at a text or a video and it's frozen in its form and you can really delve into the meaning, really consider the essence of that meaning. Think how one would translate it to another language and culture. So it's a longer more in-depth process. It's almost like an art.

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A nice analogy for this might be if you are going to a play. You go to a play, you have a stage, you have actors, you have lighting that's been carefully established for that play. You have different props. The actors have been rehearsing for weeks on end, maybe several months before the production to make everything come together. Now you come in as an audience member and you see the perfected performance, right? That's translation. Interpreting is more like improv. You go to improv show and you have an actor making it up as they go. Both are to be respected and both take quite a bit of skill, but they are in fact different and the main difference is time. With translation you have more time to delve into the text. Interpreting field you have quite a bit of research out there. People are debating and discussing and researching interpreting and that's fantastic. But the translation field we don't have many conversations or much research in this area. We have some theatrical translations here and there, but we have not really researched this field. And that's what I want to focus on is translation, not interpreting.

Let's look at translation. What is translation? People that are not involved in the translation field think that translation is -- well, see a book from another language that they don't understand and it's been translated into their language and now they can read it. Or maybe they go to the IKEA store and buy shelving unit and bring it home and now they have to put it together. They're not sure how to assemble it so they go ahead and take out the instructions and in the instructions they have it in Swedish, in English, in German, in Spanish, and so forth. So the directions are translated. But what people seem to think about translation is that the translator is taking one language and taking the message and they have to really carry across that message from one language to the other. And they do this by looking at words. So you find the first word and think, okay, I've got this word. What's the equivalent in the other language? I found it. So we got the same word in the two languages. Great. Now go on to the second word and do the same thing. Find the equivalent and put that together and that's a good translation, if you find word equivalents and it's the same words in the two languages and you just go through the translation like that and that makes a good translation. It's a one to one equivalence. Each language has the same word. And it has to be the exact same word. If it's not the exact same word they think it's not a good translation. That's often what people think of translating. And I'm here to tell you that is not what translation is. That's a complete myth. Unfortunately that's what most people think. The problem with that is

that that is what we think what translation is. If we accept that definition and believe that to be translation that it's the one-to-one equivalent, then it becomes a literal translation and that becomes a requirement and, if that's true, oh, good Lord, we are all in a lot of trouble. It doesn't matter what language you are working with...English, ASL, German, Spanish, it doesn't matter. We are all in trouble. Because each of these languages vary in structure, in form, with their lexicon. When we talk about English, for example, it has a rich vocabulary. Depending on who you ask, if you were to ask how many words are in the English language, the answer is 600,000 to one million. Some people think that it's over one million, but again it's depending who you ask. For now we will work with six hundred thousand to a million. Other languages might have 20,000 words. Another language 40-50,000. So when you look at just the words alone, English has quite a bit more. So they have these words that have different meanings, different nuances, and the other languages don't seem to have as many words so therefore people think that we can't translate.

I will give you an example of what people often ask. They will ask for the sign for *beautiful*. I so will translate it and then they will say okay, okay. How about *lovely*? How would one sign that? And I would sign it the same as I did, BEAUTIFUL. And then they ask how one signs *gorgeous*. And I will sign it the same way. And then they keep going...*pretty*. And I sign it the same way and the response is ASL isn't as complex. They have one sign for all of these nuanced words in English. So therefore translation is impossible because there is a disparity in the two languages. English is more rich, ASL more simplified if you accept this definition that I talked about as translation, then you are right. We can't translate, because all languages vary. And if this is what we think of as translation, then we wouldn't be able to trust the translation, right? But, luckily and luckily for all of us this concept of word-to-word equivalents, that's a myth. That is not translation. People who actually work in the field of translation they understand that words are not the meaning. That instead you have to go for the essence of the whole meaning. The word, the structure, the form, does not convey that in isolation.

I will show you what one translator theorist, how they talk about translation and what they shared.

So taking a word in one language and trying to find the equivalent in another language and if you can't find it, then it seems as though you can't actually provide a translation. And if that were true, people would no longer try to translate. But translators know that they don't look at the word in isolation. This have to look at context, the whole meaning. Once they understand the meaning, then they have to consider how to convey that meaning in a different language. The word, the structure, the form is not significant. What's important is that you look at that first language and that second language and understand they are going to look different. But the meaning is going to be there. The whole gestalt is conveyed.

There is one translator that has a beautiful way to explain this process. I will share it with you here.

When we look at this we understand the translator takes the meaning and they really deconstruct everything in order to understand that meaning. They then go from that meaning and they reconstruct it in the other language. And while the meaning, the essence, is the same, it's a very different piece of work in the sense that form is different. I love this metaphor.

So with this concept, this understanding of translation, we understand that it's not a literal one-to-one equivalent. We want to focus on this concept and this understanding of translation. And therefore we see the translation is possible. If we look at the word *beautiful*, the example I just gave, *beautiful, lovely, gorgeous*. Okay, we have the same sign and if we to think of it as one-to-one equivalence, we say we couldn't translate. But each language has its own way, its own unique way and features to convey meaning so the words and in ASL, we don't use a different sign. We use non-manuals or the way we sign, the speed with which we sign to change the meaning. So BEAUTIFUL, LOVELY, PRETTY, GORGEOUS. Notice the non-manual in the size of the signs and so forth. So we do have a different way to convey it. It's not the same form so we don't have to have a word-to-word equivalent. We have other linguistic features that provide the nuance of different structure and different grammar that provide the same nuances. Just in a different way. And when we see that we understand that translation is in fact possible. The only thing we are taking from the first language is the meaning and we are conveying that in the second language.

So the goal of translation is to take two languages. You have an author in the first language who wrote a text for a specific audience and that particular language, right? So we have the second language and we have a different audience to that second language. The goal of the translator is to ... and I will show you up here.

So you have the first audience that the author wrote to have a certain impact on them, to inspire them in a certain way. So looking for that impact. Now the translator's responsibility and job is to take those ideas, the concept, the goal of that author, and have that same impact and inspiration on the second audience to convey the message in a way that impacts them with that same essence as the mind. So the force is the same in the two language, but the form and the structure is different. Translator seeks to preserve the force from the first language to the second language. And if the force is the same, then it's a good translation. It's not a literal translation, but it is a good match.

With all of this information that we now have on translation, a common understanding of what translation really is, what the translator's responsibility and role is, with all of that in mind, I come back to the question, why is translation important? Maybe you will become a scientist or a teacher or a social worker, and not a translator or an interpreter. You don't see yourself in the role as translator. But here is where I really want to emphasize the importance of translation and the value for translation in all of the disciplines. Might not be something that you yourself do but it's something that I want you to keep in mind because it is so important for the validation of ASL as a language in all of our disciplines.

It is vital to ASL that you incorporate that into your use of ASL so the translation process is very vital to ASL. We circle back to people's beliefs on what they say about translation, English to ASL, it's clear that they see ASL as less than English, as not equitable. It's really frustrating for me to see that. When people make these comments, I tend to ask them more questions. I want them to explain more why they are thinking is this way. And this is their response.

Some of these comments are shocking. I can hardly believe they are saying it. Especially this one here on the right side. That ASL has no noun, verbs, or adjectives. that those belong to English. That was shocking to hear someone say that. And here is that word again. ASL is "just" talking. And that English is more exact. ASL is not, it's limited. It's abbreviated. It's simplified. These are powerful messages and it conveys the disparity of the two languages. They don't trust ASL and don't trust ASL because of these beliefs.

Now I can go on and on in regards to the importance of ASL in the instruction of deaf students and I will talk about that and we can talk about it later. That's not what the presentation is about. But I will talk about the significance of translation. We accept translation in other languages but we don't accept translation in ASL and I question that. Translation is all around us. We see it everywhere. Let me give you an example.

Some facts about translation. How many languages do you think the Bible has been translated into? This is the most translated book in the history of our world. The Bible is not the simple text. It is complex, historical. You have history, poetry, letters or stories, and it's a tome. And yet it's been translated into 500 different languages. Parts of it in over 3,000 languages. Translation is possible. People don't question that. People don't say we need to go back to the original text, the original Hebrew writing and read the Bible in the original text. They trust English or the information conveyed in the translation. No one says that. They accept the translation. The Bible has been translated into 500 languages and it's perfectly acceptable. Looking at Harry Potter. Anyone know how many languages this has been translated into? People in Finland or Denmark, who says they have to read the original text in English? They are allowed to read Harry Potter in their own language. Fine, that's accepted. No one is telling them very have to read it in the original language.

This is fantastic. This is one of my favorite children's books. Such a sweet story. It seems in the research that I've done this is the most translated book -- well, the second, the Bible being first -- but this is the second most translated book. The original text is in French. We read it here in English. No one is out there saying that there is not enough information. It's not the equivalent and we have to read it in the original French text. Of course it's accepted that we read this text in English. And if you take literature class in school or in English class, we read books from all over the world. From all different cultures. No one is insisting we read it in the original language. It's completely accepted that we read a translated version of it in English.

My point with this is -- and these are some books that we are all familiar with. The originals are in different language . For example, "The Three Musketeers." No one is insisting that we read it in French. "War and Peace," no one insisting we read it in Russian. There is no debate about this. No concern. It's accepted that we are able to read, analyze, and discuss these texts by reading the English translation.

Some people might say they wish they could read it in the original language because of course there is uniqueness to that to be able to read it in the original language. The translation is good enough. It is completely accepted here. It is in fact a substitute for the original.

Let's talk about what translators do. Translators look for matches. They look at the meaning, the impact, that force. They do not look for an exact equivalent. They look for a match, the essence, the substitute. It's accepted. A French text does not have to be read in the original French language. A Spanish novel does not have to be read in the original Spanish language. It can be translated into German for German students. The substitute is acceptable. Often times people will say, I'm sure you have heard this, though the first part might be true, the second part is true as well.

Translators, translations, they are substitutes. People accept this. But when we talk about English being translated into ASL, English works being translated to ASL, all of a sudden people are concerned about information being missed and that translation is not accurate. Where are these concerns coming from? Translations are happening all over the world in different languages and yet why are we questioning the translation of English works into ASL. To me it shows the language ideology, the disparities. This is the real frustration for me. When we talk about the act of translating, it's a powerful act. It is an action that conveys that the two languages are in fact equivalent. That this language can do X, Y, and Z and the second language can do the same thing, maybe in a different way, but they are still equivalent. They are equal. So translation proves it. It's not just lip service. It in fact proves that languages are equal. And that is important when we talk about minority languages. And we know that ASL is that minority language, but the act of translation is a powerful one indeed. To show the world that ASL is on par with other languages.

This theorist's comments on translation is a little complex, they are talking about minority languages. So when we talk about dialects, people often dismiss them. They think it's not important. They look at the majority language, for example, English, French, German, the larger languages as more important. And they don't hold these minority languages as important. So they feel the majority languages need to be read and these minority languages don't matter. The point of this, is that translation, the act of translating, is reclaiming one's language. Elevating it and showing it equal-ness to the majority languages. Not relying and depending on the majority languages and their cultures and identity to define oneself, but instead using their own minority language, one's own culture and identity, to understand the text and make it more accessible. That is a reclaiming and a powerful act. And again, it shows and proves to the world that

these minority languages are equivalent to the majority languages. They are on equal footing.

Most of my comments up to this point have focused on English literature being translated to ASL because that is in fact most of my work and what I'm focusing on. Occasionally I will translate from ASL to English but it's mostly one directional for my work. However, the act of translating ASL to English is also an important and powerful tool. When a minority language is translated into a majority language ... well, the majority languages, for example, German, French, Spanish, English, they tend to have their own global discussions, if you will. Because their works have been translated into each other's languages and that's been going on historically for quite a long time so they are in this global discussion. Minority languages are typically not translated into majority language. Their literature, their poetry, their ideas, their opinions, their thoughts, their philosophies. While they stay in the minority language, the majority language doesn't have access to them and minority languages are very rich. So the majority languages dismiss these minority languages because they have no access to them and the minority languages have no voice. So the global discussion continues without these minority languages. When one translated a minority language, for example, ASL translated into English, now the majority language can understand the minority language. There is no excuse any longer. The ideas, the opinions of the minority language are now brought into the global discussion.

Another reason to translate from ASL to English and the reason that it's a powerful act, is that we have in one country several languages. Cronin is an Irish author and he talks about Gaelic language. Language that has been around in Ireland since the early on but we see that it's no longer being used because what's happening is the majority language is taking over the minority language. It's larger. There are more people using it. More widespread. So while both languages are being used, we see the encroachment, the dominant language, the majority language permeating the minority language. So the minority language take on features of the majority language, it starts to borrow different features of that language and it changes the minority language and it's no longer Gaelic. So Cronin talks about that action that is taking place in Ireland. One way to prevent this is translation. Translation is a clear bound sets up a clear boundary. If we have English, we have Gaelic, it separates the languages. It does not allow for the infiltration. It keeps English pure and it keeps Gaelic pure. So a very clear boundary that presents the encroachment of the minority language. So if we are talking about ASL, a great example of that is how SEE infiltrated into the ASL language. It took over and changed ASL, the grammar, structure, started following a more English form. So, the ASL started to adopt English features – initialized signs is one example. And then deaf people realized they wanted to in fact keep the languages separate. To bring ASL back to its pure form and keep the languages separate. Within the Deaf community, ASL users, we were minority within the majority of the hearing culture and see that encroachment of English on our language time and type again. My suggestion is that translation is one way to keep the languages separate. That boundary to show them separately and show them as equals. We can protect our ASL in this manner. So again translation in either direction is

powerful. It provide access to people, stories, poetry, from different lands and different cultures and makes it accessible to all. As I said, it's also an act to show the equivalence of the minority language and it also protects the minority language. These are powerful acts.

One theorist talks about how vital translation is for all languages. Be that the majority or minority languages. It is vital.

Translation allows us to share ideas, thoughts, stories, poetry across languages, which then stimulates and generates more creation of ideas and thoughts. This is a powerful act. When we talk about ASL translation, there haven't been many throughout our history. It's great we have interpretation but we need translation. They are here and there throughout the community. Someone who might be quite skilled at translation might do it as a hobby. We might have a few individual degrees of people but it's not disseminated and not shared within the community. Maybe regionally we will see it here and there or maybe in the theater and there is a lot of translation occurring in the theater. So a script will be translated into ASL and once the play is done, the translation just disappears. Maybe it was videotaped or archived, but it sits somewhere on the shelf and it's not shared with the larger community.

So while we have some translation, we need to make sure we have a way of collecting it and preserving it. We don't yet and one of the reasons we need to do this is to show the equivalents of ASL to English. So we just don't have the evidence right now to do so. This is your language. ASL is your language. We can talk about how it's equal to English all we want but talk is cheap. It's time to get to work. And translation shows the power behind that. It proves the two languages are equal. We might not be a translator and that's fine, but keep this in the back of your mind that this is a valuable tool. This is valuable to ASL, to us as a community, to our culture, and our language. So with that, I will wrap it up. And I guess I will invite Jennifer up on the stage to have a discussion.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

Last year you came as well for the visual Shakespeare conference and it's great to see you and I wanted to talk more about that after this presentation. I will definitely want to talk to you more about that.

I teach English. I'm the chair of the English department here. I agree with your framing about translation and about English and ASL. It's a different language but they are both on par with one another. I enjoyed your presentation. But I do want to talk about stories and the struggles and having literature translated to ASL.

When I was in grad school, about 20 years ago now, a long time ago, I met my adviser for the first time and this person was a famous person in Shakespeare and did a lot of publishing about Shakespeare so we had a discussion about Shakespeare. And we were talking about translating Shakespeare to ASL. And I said, you know it could be translated to ASL. My adviser said, "Oh, no way. We have to preserve the Shakespeare

and we would have to use signed English to represent Shakespeare.” Now I learned sign language later on in life, but I recognized the value of the American Sign Language. We ended up getting in an argument about it because there was that different language ideology that you mentioned in your presentation. That really struck me hard. We were clearly talking about ASL and they are saying, no, it had to be interpreted and translated into Signed English, which I disagreed with. So we agreed to disagree on this issue.

I found out later my adviser respected me more for sharing my opinion about that. So I think it's very common that they think in general, people think in general ASL is not on par with that common misconception. So you are saying we have to take action in order to change that. But what can we do? Maybe we translate more literature to ASL? Maybe more Shakespeare to ASL? And my other question is do you think that things have improved over the last few years?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

As an English teacher, I find myself struggling at times too. I value ASL and I value both languages. But often times people are saying if you are an English teacher why would you have ASL translations in the classroom? Well, because I see the value in both. Both have value. Now in the last few years there have been some shifts. A few people have been studying ASL translations. There is one PhD student here at Gallaudet that is writing a dissertation on ASL translation where we see the paradigm shifting. When you talk about Shakespeare, last year's gathering was quite powerful for me. We had all of these experts in Shakespeare in the room together talking, brainstorming. A really rich dialogue and discussion. With regards to what you were saying about what could be done, the challenge to date has been for the translator, it might be translating something like, well if we were doing, let's go with Shakespeare. If we are doing Romeo and Juliet, you get together and get the translators translating it and then three or four years later you might decide you want to do Romeo and Juliet and don't know we have this translated work already. We have it ready and we worked and have a beautiful piece of translated work, but you don't know we have that, so then you go ahead and translate the same play. So now we are reinventing the wheel. We have no easy way to disseminate this information to check is there a translation out there. English, French, Spanish, you can look it up online and find the translations of the text but can't do that in ASL so we need to somehow, and the key is the translation we can modify slightly if you want but we have no way to access that for ASL.

So unfortunately there are archives somewhere and it's hidden to most of us. We don't have access and might hear about it but don't seem to have access to it. Someone will say I did that years ago, but where is that now? And we are all out looking for this and we don't have easy access to it. One of the things we might be able to do is put equal value in the translation work itself and then we have the value the archiving of that translation. So maybe it's a translation bank we create that we pool all of our resourcing to and keep all of our translations in one place so that way if someone needs to use it they can go ahead and do so. That might be one way. If you are talking about the every day person and non-translators, we need to help them recognize and support the value

behind our work. Because of course we don't want these translations to just disappear into nothingness. We all need to value their worth.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

I haven't done translation work myself, but I understand and really value the process. So that brings up another issue of digital archiving and preserving things in ASL. How do you think that will happen? I see some of the work being done on the Internet and it's being archived. Some of the other countries, such as in Europe, have already done this, but is there one place that everything can be housed? What are people doing now to archive digital recordings?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Well, right now we are talking about it. We are dialoguing and brainstorming but don't yet have anything in place. We are still trying to figure out what the best way might be. Of course technology is always changing. We have some on VHS, do we translate that into a digital form that's more accessible? Do we clean it up? What do we do with it? One idea people are talking about is the digital journal and using digital journals. Having some sort of digital journal that would have a peer reviewed, make sure the quality of the translation is appropriate and once it's accepted and then have it archived. That's one possibility. Others have talked about more crowd sourcing. Just creating a centralized place. But it's where, how and where the funds will come for that. It's still being discussed.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

So it's nice to have crowd sourcing done but the other issue is who actually reviews the material and who approves it and who decides it's okay to archive. So I imagine that's a bigger project. I know some are doing a little bit of work in setting up an archive of Shakespeare to ASL translation but it's in the works and just beginning the process. Yeah, a lot of things still need to be carried out and finished.

So ASL is visual and a lot of material is in existence in ASL, so what about, we don't yet have a written form of it yet.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Some people have asked me about this in regards to having a written form. I suppose it could be helpful and could be beneficial. But ASL, where it lives is in the movement. It's in the conveying through the body and the person. If you try to take that away from its form and put it in written form, you lose something.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

A lot of people say the same for written English and spoken English though too.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Right. We do have a way of freezing ASL, to have frozen text – that's video. Video is the equivalent. We have the technology now. Certainly we didn't back then, but now we do

so we can disseminate those videos so we do have frozen text in ASL. The fact that we are requiring print, it seems to be an embedded value and belief that if a language doesn't have a written form, that it's less than and that's a myth. It's a real challenge for us. To force ASL to have print, I'm not sure that we need to. It doesn't sit well with me because we do have a way of preserving it and having a frozen form. It captures it on video. So it's the same if someone were to be capturing English via print. We -- the spoken English and print -- we capture ASL on video. Do we also have to have a printed form to show we are on par with other languages? I'm not sure. My question is why can't we accept that ASL's way of being captured is video? That we capture the language in the same way that we capture spoken language in print. We do so in video. My question is why not just reframe it?

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

That's a great topic. I do have one more question. It's more specific with performances ...the process of translation for performances. So it's interesting because the person that does this translation and then actually does the interpretation through ASL on stage, does that person then become one of the writers for the production?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

It's true whether it be print or in sign. That translator becomes an author because it's a new piece of work. Yes, it's originated from another author but this new piece of work is being authored by the translation. It's nice to have print, right? So the translator can work on it, think it through and change it as they need to and then they are done. It's in print. Then of course if it's published, you have the translator's name under the author's name. With an ASL translator that's difficult because you make the translation and then you hand it off for publication and in a very different way. It's not in print. You now have to decide are you the one that will sign it? Are you the one that will quote-unquote perform it? It's your non-manuals – it's your language choice. Right? So it becomes part of your process in the translation. So one non-manual can change the entire meaning.

Of course, you to follow the original author's meaning. I used the word *angry*, for example. In print you see *angry*. Okay, I can read read angry and I understand the concept behind the word. It has variance. But when I sign it, if I become the person who is speaking angry in the language, how angry do I become? How angry do I show? Some kind of anger that's festering? Am I annoyed? Am I furious? How am I going to produce that concept of anger from text? So really have to take the context, the best match that I can. When I put it into ASL and watch the video and I conveyed it in a way that's not true to the original meaning and so I have to change it so I do become the actor in some way. Perhaps maybe I translate it and then I give it to a professional signer to perform that in ASL and I make sure they are staying true to what I said is the translation, that they're matching the concept of anger in the appropriate way. And so then for the audience, what's the impact, right? You have the actor or the translator, you have the face there. The entire translation is embedded in that person in a way that's different than print.

I can remember when I was younger I was watching Patrick Graybill one time on stage. I adore him. I just love him. He did the translation of a short story, The Black Cat. I think it was by Poe. Anyway, so he did a translation and as a kid I remember watching it and watching his long fingers and his signs. And being really mesmerized by the whole process. Many years later, I really forgotten the incident, many years later when I was in college and I read The Black Cat in English. I could immediately see Patrick Graybill signing it, I could see his face, his hands and his interpretation of it. It was embedded. I could not separate what I was reading. And I realized it's a responsibility for the translator that you, your body, your face is all incorporated. It is the translation. It's a real challenge. The traditional form of translating from print to print is in fact different. We have to acknowledge that. The ASL translation is more elevated in a way so one could argue that the ASL translator is even more advanced than the regular translator from print to print because they themselves are embedded in that translation.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

Yeah, it's translation into the body, versus on paper. So that brings upon a lot more other issues.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

It's not just language. It's modality. We have print to print but now we have the body, the modality, the movement, the person.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

That certainly adds another level to what you have talked about today.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

It certainly does. The research of translation as I have said is in its infancy. We have a long way to go and as we delve in I think we will see those different layers of complexity.

DR. JENNIFER NELSON

At the visual Shakespeare conference, I talked about how Shakespeare is actually better in ASL than English, and I got people really astonished by that concept. But now we certainly understand what that could mean and there's an added complexity and that's what was part of the argument in that conference discussion. So we really appreciate what you have brought to us this morning. I enjoyed your presentation.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Thank you for your questions. They were really thought provoking.

DR. BRENDA NICODEMUS

Thank you Dr. Nelson for your comments and questions and you framed it very nicely. So now we have approximately 15 minutes left. I would like to invite all of you up to the front stage to ask any questions you may have. And while we are waiting for people to line up, I would like to ask the first question. You talked about the process of translation. With the spoken language and how there are set processes in place that you could

study. But we heard a little bit about translating from English to ASL and the actual process of it. Can you talk a little bit about how you actually do it.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

My process? What process? Well, I start the process of translating -- what's the process? I don't know exactly. When I started I didn't know what other people did so I tried to figure out what worked for me and what I had come up with is I first sit down and I look at the text and I really analyze it. I think about what the meaning is. Try to visual what the meaning is so the first step is just understanding. And first it could be Shakespeare and Shakespeare can be quite difficult. First getting clarity on the meaning. A rough idea of how I might sign it and sign choices and I will make notes or classifiers might work where. And when I feel solid on that rough draft and feeling okay about it, I then begin the process of signing it and then I realize what works and what doesn't and I start to shift and mold it from there.

The performance changes the whole translation because then you start to really feel it and experience it. And I maybe will do something and in sign that I didn't put down in my notes and I think that sign fits better. While the notes are guiding a starting point I start to then perform it and the actual act of putting it in ASL changes it and I go back to my notes and consider it again and do another rendition and then I change it again and I will eventually watch the video that I produced and then see if it matches the text. Other people might put more notes down. I don't. I go more on intuition while I'm actually putting it into ASL and watch myself on the video and make my edits from there. That's my process.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Hello. My question is about how to translate into ASL. Is it normal to read English and then translate it into ASL when there are puns and comedy?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Ah yes, humor. Humor can be very difficult for any translator in any language. Humor does not translate well from one language to another. Translators often find a different pun or a different joke in the second language that has the same impact because it won't make sense if you take it from the first language to the second language without considering that. You have to consider your audience. For example, I was helping translate Mary Poppins. The play, Mary Poppins. So I was working to translate that and the word that came up in the translation and we were trying to think how to convey it. It was a joke. It was based on some phonetic A and B, they were playing with the phonetic language. Very auditorily-based it wasn't funny to me as a deaf person as all. They were trying to make fun how people spoke. And I think well, how do deaf people make fun of other people who sign. That make fun of them the way they sign in a more English form so it was the same type of joke but I changed it slightly so it made sense to the audience. It wasn't the exact same joke but the impact was the same. They were mocking language in a way that makes sense to the deaf audience members. However, again, humor in any language translating it is very difficult. One of most difficult tasks

when you do the translation and something you have to delve deep into and consider the meaning before you do it.

BEVERLY HOLLRAH

Hello. I really enjoyed your presentation. I've never thought about other translations and how you do checks and balances. Do you actually check your ASL to English or English to ASL translation? And do you ever check to make sure it's correct?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

I don't work alone. I work with other translators. And it's always best to work with others and when you work alone in isolation, you don't have that feedback and so I advise to check with others because what happens is rarely do translators work alone. We check each other. We look at it. See if it's working and if it's not if you are stuck or figure something out you can brain storm with others. Working alone I think is a dangerous, dangerous way to go about translating.

DR. DANIELLE HUNT

Hello. It was a wonderful presentation of I really enjoyed it. I teach translating and consecutive interpreting here so I'm really fascinated with it. But I also work in performance and theater interpreting. So there is a lot more applicable work with directors of American Sign Language translator where you have interpreters that are there. And we have an ASL Sign Master. How do you see the difference between hearing interpreter and interpreting material versus the deaf person working with and translating the material?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

I have a lot of thoughts on that. So you have a deaf translator, that's always beneficial to the process absolutely, always. Interpreters might be proficient and well trained but it's not the native language. So working with the Deaf master translator, they are more creative with the language. It's the first language. They can play with it in a way that a non-native cannot so it's very valuable for the process, to pair the two together, I would say.

DR. LORI WHYNOT

Hi. I'm Lori Whynot. I teach interpreting and translation here. Thank you for your presentation. I think it's a very important discussion. I wrote my questions down. I've had the privilege to work with a group of Deaf people in Australia on a research project where we looked at standardizing translation for websites, so the governor and the businesses have a common understanding of language. But I see other opportunities in museums and tours where they use translations for those where you can actually do translations. Where you have sign language for film and important that we have translation involved in those areas. And you mentioned that can't work alone and that's a great opportunity for hearing people and Deaf people and people to work together on translations where you watch it, you check with one another which I think is very important to do to get that translation out there. It's really just a social justice impact. And

I'm hoping that and wondering how you plan to do more of this and try to get it out because it is such important work.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Well, thank you. My next step is producing translations, gathering what we have, finding a central place and figuring out what we need. And also I as you mentioned the standardization of translation, what the process looks like, that would be wonderful. I know that Janis Cole here is a PhD student writing her dissertation looking at ASL translators and their process. That is be valuable information. Because really as I said I kind of started off and wondered how will I start this process and what am I going to do? I figured out as I when along so to have some sort of standardization and some kind of conventions put in place and process put in place that would be beneficial for all. Also that it provides more people to get involved in the work of translation. Maybe people want to, maybe that I they are curious, but they don't know how to. If we have more training, I need more training myself. I still feel like I don't know exactly what I'm doing. Often times they will put out the translation and hope that's good enough, right? So if we had training, if have methodologies and approaches, that would be helpful for all of us.

DR. LORI WHYNOT

Interesting because you mentioned the process and I can share the research that we've done in Australia. We have the process in place. They actually looked at the approach -- they actually looked up at the sign languages and I certainly can provide that resource for you. You are doing wonderful work. Thank you.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Hi. You're from Idaho and I'm wondering about the school for the deaf. There is a small school for the deaf there and a lot of hearing teachers there, so I wonder if you could perhaps do translation for students in high school and wondering if you could pull together some resources for schools.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

That's a great question and we both went to the same deaf school. It's a rural deaf school. Outside students who are mainstreamed. We don't have access to proficient signers. Sometimes we do but more often than not we don't. And so what does one do? And that's one of the reasons we have to support the act of translating. The more translations we have, the easier the access is. And that could be provided to the students in a rich form of their language. So maybe the teachers themselves don't have that language proficiencies, but they have the translation, a beautiful model for them all. It's accessible so it makes them literature accessible. And the teacher can use that in the classroom. What a rich tool and part of my research is looking at the high school classroom when we bring these translations in what's the impact? In a nutshell really I don't want to ruin the end, but it is a powerful impact for the students in many, many ways. But there is still a lot of things we need to figure out what the best approach is, pedagogies, do we have the English text with the ASL translation? Do we provide one before the other? It's a rich resource for these professors and teachers who are working

without proficiency in the language or when the students are in isolation, again we have these rich language models. And unfortunately we don't have all of the resources that people are really hungry for. So that's the next step...collecting the resources and advertising them and making them available for all. If there is a cost that it's affordable for the students and the teachers.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Well, when you translate the word, more people should be -- it should be more readily available through the Internet if possible so people can use it as a resource.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Hi, I really enjoyed your presentation and found it very interesting. I did show up a little late so I apologize. I wish I was here at the beginning. Anyhow, I was thinking about this little bit more and you had talked about translation and what the difference between the interpreting and translating is and you might have said that but can you explain it again if you did?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

I did. Really, the speed. The process is the same but interpreting is simultaneous. It's right there in the live moment. So time -- one doesn't have time to analyze the work. With translation one has a lot of time and one can sit down with the text or the video and analyze it and consider it and make decisions, delve deep into the understanding of the text. So really get the full essence of it. It's an artistic act. So the process is similar but the timing of the process and it's different and also requires a different skill.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Okay. So when they do Spanish translation and the translators are actually doing this, is that the same type thing you are doing? And then is that the same as interpreting into ASL?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

People tend to use the word *translator* as going from text to text or spoken language to spoken language. But really those are interpreters. If it's a spoken language to another spoken language or a spoken language to a sign language, that's an interpreter. Translation unfortunately gets used as a synonym and it's not really. tends to get a translation is something frozen to another frozen text. That's the translation process. The interpreting process is when you are working with people, live people and going from one language to another. You see?

AUDIENCE QUESTION

Oh, okay. You also mentioned that the translations happen separately. When you have English to ASL and you talked about the Signing Exact English and keeps the languages separate and then there's contact sign language and that's influencing ASL. So ASL incorporates a lot of other languages as well. Do interpreters actually know that? Because a lot of interpreters just use Signed Exact English with ASL with pidgin sign

language. We should respect both languages and not have them influence one another. Of course, because we don't want to see ASL diminished. So, how could we help interpreters understand that better?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

We are talking about interpreters. They have a very challenging job before them, taking two languages and two cultures and having to do it simultaneously, holy cow. It's a lot going on. I acknowledge that it's difficult. Ideally though, they should keep the two languages separate, absolutely. To do two languages at the same time you will diminish both of the languages at least one more so than the other. It's impossible to capture both of them accurately. We want to keep them separate but how do we solve this? I'm not sure. So I know that those of us who use ASL, we can establish expectations that respects our language. We can respect both languages while keeping them separate. So we need to establish our expectation and not be passive in this process and accept what's given to us but we need to do so in a respectful way and make sure that the languages are kept separate. So when we talk about translation, it forces that boundary. It's right there. It's from one language to another and it's not allowing the languages to infiltrate each other.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

So if we establish those boundaries, how do you actually recognize it is being separate?

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

So if I'm translating, I take one language and I convey it in the other language. And I either am working in English or in ASL and I'm not doing modified version of either. I take the original text and all of its form and get the meaning of it. Take out that language and I will consider meaning in the second language and do it in that second language. I'm not cherry picking and throwing them together and hoping something makes sense. I'm forcing the separation and the boundary of the one language and the other so I want them to look at the English text, take the time to then translate it into ASL keeping them separate.

AUDIENCE QUESTION

This seems like a struggle in finding the answer in how to separate the two languages but I appreciate your presentation. Thank you.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Certainly. It's never easy. Thank you.

DR. BRENDA NICODEMUS

Thank you so much. I loved the last comment. That it's not very easy. We feel that every day. We recognize the challenges. We do have people lined up to ask you some other questions. And I know that people on-line can't ask questions, but we must wrap this up and go to lunch and this was a beautiful, beautiful presentation. Lovely presentation. It seems like the discussion, it seems very simple but there is really a lot of complicated

issues and not just taking one language to another. There is a lot of ideologies. They are very embedded in people and rich.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Right, I said the term "just" translation. We need to get rid of that word. Translation is a difficult and rich process.

DR. BRENDA NICODEMUS

Thank you so much and I just have a little gift for you. Thank you so much for your work. Again, I would like to invite you to the next lecture series on February 9th. Dr. Deborah Russell was going to talk about legal research. Thanks again for being with us.

DR. RUTH ANNA SPOONER

Thank you. what a wonderful audience! Thank you so much.