

Recreational Interpreting: Bringing Access to Adventure

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Abstract

American sign language interpreters are often given the metaphor that their work is like a duck. On the surface, they seem to be gliding smoothly across the water, under the surface their feet or in interpreters' case the brain is frantically working to give that smooth gliding appearance. A part of many interpreters' cognitive process is based on prediction to support the clear and clean production of a message. Given the unpredictability of outdoor environments, a further examination of the role of interpreters would prove beneficial. This research will explore access to outdoor recreation for Deaf individuals, specifically through the role and responsibilities of interpreters in these environments. This study will first examine outlined high-demand environments and draw comparisons between each and outdoor settings. Learning obtained via that comparison will then be applied to in the field research via the demand control schema; an analytical tool utilized by interpreters to inform their ethical decision-making process. This applied research will aim to make outdoor recreation more accessible to the Deaf community through expanding interpreters' understanding and providing further educational opportunities relating to outdoor environments.

Background

American sign language interpreters are naturally placed under a lot of pressure, more commonly referred to as “cognitive load” within the field. Interpreters must, ethically, smoothly, and most often simultaneously take a message in a verbal form and put it into a signed form. When the cognitive load placed on interpreters is exacerbated by various factors within the given situation, a high-demand setting arises. While any situation has the potential to become a high-demand setting, there are a few settings within the field that are known to be naturally high-demand for a multitude of reasons. The main three that are commonly understood as high-demand are medical, legal and educational. Each of those settings received the label for different reasons. Due to the knowledge surrounding each of those settings, the field has developed more education and certification for those settings. Outside of those three, other high-demand settings exist, but lack the same opportunities for education and certification, one of those being outdoor recreation.

To explain the demands placed on interpreters in high demand settings, it is important to examine these fields from a more general perspective as Jamie Walker and Sherry Shaw do in their article, *Interpreter Preparedness for Specialized Settings*. This article outlines specialized settings such as legal, educational, medical and Deafblind interpreting. This study focused on settings in which graduates of interpreter training programs (ITPs) felt the most and least prepared to work in, focusing on what the educators did to make them feel prepared or not to work in these settings. In particular,

this article discussed the training to work gap, where graduated interpreters have a hard time entering the workforce due to their lack of exposure and experience truly in the field rather than in the classroom.

This research added the volatility, or unpredictability, of a situation into consideration. The author gave the example of a child visiting the emergency room turning into a child abuse investigation, while the interpreter may be qualified to interpret the medical side of this conversation, there is now a legal side that is equally as important for all parties to understand. Situations like this occur in many different fields but are usually much more serious in high demand situations due to the pre-existing demands in the situations. Examples in outdoor environments may seem less volatile due to the assumed risk that people involved in the industry are aware of. However, an interpreter may not be as familiar with this assumed risk, as well there is going to be a much more dramatic volatility that even if expected, is still much more jarring for the interpreter. An example could be if a consumer is out with a group and they witness someone else getting severely injured, one of the leaders of that group may have training to respond to that situation. However, the interpreter may not have the proper medical experience to accurately translate what is going on should that be asked of them. This idea of volatility should be recognized when entering high demand/specialized settings. Being able to understand and rationalize what could happen and prepare for that in advance will decrease the demand placed on interpreters even in unexpected situations. At the same time, decreasing the demands placed on the interpreter in the initial situation will

exponentially increase the quality of the interpretation as well as the interpreter's ability to continually interpret the situations.

An interesting area to explore within the field of outdoor recreation is outdoor education. Anthony Rosario DeMare, wrote the article titled, *Barriers Facing Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing People in Outdoor Education*. This article analyzes the barriers that Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals face in the field of outdoor education, including things such as economic, legal and accessibility, social and educational barriers. The study aimed to not only point out barriers but also provide solutions to these barriers. Each of these barriers were analyzed through scholarly research in addition to commentary from the author who is Deaf, thus offering real life experience with his own struggles in the field.

Social barriers are one of primary barriers to entry for Deaf individuals. Being Deaf in a group of hearing people can be quite isolating without the proper accommodations, just having an interpreter is where the accommodation starts rather than when it ends. Without thinking about it one may not think that there are many instances where social opportunities are missed; however, DeMare brings to light things like ease of communication which goes beyond just guide to client interactions but interactions with others engaging with the outdoors. One quote from an interview DeMare shared was from Christy Smith who was a participant on the show Survivor, she reflected on her experience and said, "I felt excluded because I didn't know how to share my needs with my fellow castaways nor did they know how to work with me. I missed out on developing relationships because communication was not accessible and there was a

general lack of understanding” (DeMare 21). While there are times when communication is physically difficult on this show, there are plenty of opportunities for participants to interact with each other, however because there was a language/communication difference, other participants chose not to interact with Christy. This is an experience that can be seen in more than just outdoor environments. With that it is important to examine what exists in Deaf individuals' way, preventing them from accessing the outdoors thus how working interpreters are able to exist within their role to support access to the outdoors.

Deaf Community in Outdoor Recreation

Back in 2023, scrolling through social media on various Deaf centered pages/forums, a Deaf couple, Scott and Shayna were going viral for their incredible feats of summiting Mt Everest. The two started their epic adventure of the seven tallest summits in the world in 2015 with Mt.Kilimanjaro. Since then, the couple has been working to summit all seven summits, which would make them the first Deaf Americans and two of only 460 people altogether to complete this daunting task. The couple has done this as a Deaf team, initially teaching themselves to be mountaineers/climbers as little resources were accessible to them, to creating a communication system with their sherpas before their climb up Everest. The couple has been documenting their trips to support and encourage other Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to get outside as well (Scott and Shayna 2025). This couple's adventures have not mentioned the use of interpreters, which makes sense due to the worldwide nature of their endeavors, but also goes to show that Deaf individuals do not need interpreters. Further, utilizing interpreting services should be an option for those that would like it. Also on a much larger scale, allowing the outdoors to remain an accessible place without the need for accommodations should be a goal.

Corps THAT is a company that is dedicated to creating outdoor opportunities for Deaf individuals, through recreation, education and jobs. A video webinar they posted on YouTube shared a panel discussion with Deaf professionals involved in the outdoor industry. Lauren Sprague, Rupert Dubler and Anthony DeMare have all taken part in the

outdoor industry in various ways. Some of them have degrees in outdoor leadership or job experience in outdoor leadership, as well all of them have participated in a group outdoor excursion. Their discussion on this panel was primarily focused on their experience as a Deaf consumer on these trips, one conversation they had was about their experience with interpreters on these trips. Rupert's experience highlighted the importance of having qualified interpreters on this trip. To summarize his experience, while on a trip for outdoor educators with National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in the Alaskan backcountry, he had one interpreter. This interpreter was, according to Rupert, motivated but not right for the job. The interpreter was also freshly graduated from an interpreter training program at a community college in the area and did not have extensive outdoor experience or knowledge. In the end Rupert reported that this did not end well, he felt bad for the interpreter as they were clearly out of their comfort zone, which in turn caused him to feel isolated and miss a lot of crucial information.

Lauren Sprague also shared her experiences working with interpreters in outdoor settings and shared three different experiences. First, she had a really positive experience with interpreters on a week-long river trip, being able to recall that she and the interpreters were able to become friends over the course of the trip and it was incredibly enjoyable on top of being able to accomplish her goals of being on the trip. The second experience she shared she felt the interpreters, though good interpreters were not a good fit for outdoor interpreting, which she ended up compensating for and those around her noticed that change. Finally, she had a hearing interpreter and CDI team on the final trip

and noted that she felt incredibly successful on this trip and noted that she was able to learn so much from the trip.

The point of sharing their experiences is to show both the importance of having qualified interpreters but also to showcase the reality of outdoor interpreting at this time. This video was posted back in 2022, however there have been no notable changes or improvements that would suggest this is an inaccurate representation of more recent experiences as well. All of these professionals in the outdoor setting show that there is a presence of Deaf individuals in the outdoors, as well, a community that wants to encourage more Deaf individuals to get outside and experience these activities. As noted by Scott and Shayna, interpreters are not the only way that Deaf individuals have access to the outdoors, but it is a service that should be available and reliable for Deaf consumers that chose to have it.

High-demand setting standards

As there is an insignificant amount of research done on interpreting in outdoor environments, it is useful to explore research done on other high demand environments. This research provides insight to what takes place in these environments to make the situation successful for the interpreter as well as the consumers. It is also evident that interpreting in outdoor environments is somewhat niche thus research done more generally on specialized environments, will be an important addition to apply as it will offer a less specific thus more widely applicable approach to these tricky environments.

Generally, parallels can be drawn between more researched high demand settings and outdoor settings, especially when approaching them from a DC-S perspective. This comparison will be explored later in providing future recommendations for outdoor interpreters. More specific similarities can be drawn based on research already conducted in the environment.

Deb Russell and Len Robson published the article titled, *American Sign Language/English Interpreting in Legal Settings: Current Practices in North America*. This article reviews the current practices in legal interpreting, the demographics of interpreters in this field, as well as comparing their educational background pertaining to the field. Within legal settings, certification is much more monitored both from those hiring entrepreneurs as well as among ethically practicing interpreters. The article explains that the requirement for these certifications in the legal field is due to a few reasons. First, the legal jargon in the field, in order to accurately interpret a message the

interpreter must possess knowledge of these words and phrases. Second, the sensitivity of the information shared in these spaces. It is important to be able to accurately reflect the prosody of a message, in addition to interpreting the actual linguistic meaning of the message so that misunderstandings are minimized. In addition to the sensitivity of these interactions, big decisions are often made in courtrooms, making the weight of these interactions heightened. Someone's life could rely on how these interactions occur thus adding to the sensitivity and the cognitive load placed on the interpreter. Third, due to the lack of regulation and standardization among practicing interpreters, there can be a mistrust that many Deaf individuals place on working with an interpreter. It is a frequent experience that Deaf people get an unqualified interpreter for the situation they are relying on an interpreter for.

A main idea shared throughout this article is the discussion of errors, why they occur and the consequences of these errors. In discussing the occurrence of interpreter errors, it is important to understand that errors are a natural part of the work and it is not a judgment on interpreters. Interpreters are just as human as everyone else and when so much is placed on them, errors are bound to happen. Specifically, when discussing the consequences of these errors, the authors brought up a study done by Kolb and Pöchhacker on interpreting in asylum hearings. "Their findings pointed to lexical errors, semantic inaccuracies, and the omission of tag question forms that would have allowed the applicant to explain his or her actions, if they had known that the opportunity had been there." (4 Robson & Russell). They explained that these findings reflect a similar study on access to interpreters in legal settings and the effect interpreters have on these

situations. Though these findings are in legal settings, similar conclusions can be drawn on other high demand environments. There is no doubt that information has been missed or dropped between doctor and patient due to interpreter errors, as well, missed information in outdoor settings due to interpreter errors. The article further explains that one of the things that reduced these errors by a significant amount was allowing the interpreters to properly prepare for their assignment. Just as legal professionals need to prepare for court, interpreters need to be well versed in the case and what is occurring to accurately interpret the message. Moreover, it has been proven that allowing interpreters to properly prepare for assignments has been beneficial across multiple fields, not just high demand settings.

Another main finding from this research was the effect of consecutive versus simultaneous interpreting and team interpreting versus having a single interpreter. It was emphasized that a lot of these findings do not reflect the quality of the interpreter more so the situation that they are placed in due to a lack of knowledge about interpreting and the Deaf community. To summarize, the article found that consecutive interpreting reduced errors and was found more effective as a whole and team interpreting was significantly more effective compared to solo interpreting. More specifically, working in consecutive interpreting reduced errors due to the interpreter's ability to hear the entirety of the message before having to interpret, allowing for them to have more time to process the message, thus more accurately interpreting it from the source language to the target language.

Working in teams allowed for more accountability among interpreters and less cognitive load placed on interpreters. Accountability among interpreters has been a topic of discussion for quite a while within the field. One way that allows for accountability to be held in addition to other benefits is through team interpreting. Having two interpreters present allows for them to hold each other accountable as well as reduce the cognitive load on each of the interpreters, allowing them to have periods of time where one interpreter is “off” but still engaged to support the interpreter that is on. While having two hearing interpreters is a reliable option, the authors make it clear that having a Deaf/hearing team interpreter is the most effective option. Having a certified Deaf interpreter (CDI) and a hearing interpreter not only provides the benefits that having two hearing interpreters provides but also creates more trust between the Deaf client and the interpreters, as well as closing the cultural gap between the hearing interpreters and the Deaf community.

All in all, the findings of this research, though not a perfect replication of outdoor environments, can still be applied due to the similarities of demands placed on interpreters. In these high demand environments details that seem insignificant to most become an added demand for interpreters which in turn can exacerbate the pressure placed on interpreters in these settings with a naturally high cognitive load. The exploration into legal fields has shown that allowing qualified and educated interpreters to properly prepare, and accommodating interpreting teams rather than solo interpreters, allows for the interactions in these high demand settings to flow much smoother and the relationship between the consumers and the interpreters to be significantly better.

Another high demand setting that offers an interesting perspective is the medical setting. An article by Lisa Harmer titled *Health Care Delivery and Deaf People: Practice, Problems, and Recommendations for Change* discusses much about the recurring barriers to access that prevent Deaf individuals from seeking medical attention. This article addresses the medical field from multiple perspectives to address the various issues that commonly occur when Deaf individuals are seeking healthcare. The author specifically discussed systemic barriers, one of those barriers is a lack of qualified interpreters.

Much like in legal interpreting a further qualification is required to practice in the medical field, making these qualified interpreters few and far between in some areas. Further, scheduling with interpreters makes an appointment much harder to find, as well as whether or not the medical provider/insurance will actually provide interpreting services. This issue of a lack of interpreters has been seen across multiple fields. Which has been a catalyst for many other issues within the interpreting field. In these high demand fields, having a sufficient base of qualified interpreters is paramount to the success of the communication. However, as this article discusses, the Americans with disabilities act (ADA) requires that a sign language interpreter be brought when one is needed/requested. Due to the lack of a regulated certification and lack of understanding of the field the ADA does not specify that these interpreters be qualified. Another consideration in this discussion is the fact that the professional field of interpreting is a fairly recent development. In the past, it was placed on the Deaf individuals to either hire an interpreter or a family member would come to interpret. This made perceptions of the

interpreting field quite lackadaisical, rather than being seen for the practice profession that it has become.

When discussing the lack of understanding that medical professionals have when dealing with Deaf consumers the author states, “When an interpreter is hired, it is critical that physicians recognize the limitations of the interpreted health care appointment. It cannot be assumed that the presence of an interpreter guarantees adequate communication between provider and patient” (Steinberg et al., 1998; Harmer p97). This quote continues on to explain that the physician should check in with the patient and ask that they repeat back what they told them. On a similar note, when working with interpreters in outdoor environments accommodations will need to be made to ensure proper communication can occur. This author reasons that this should be done due to the fact that Deaf people have most commonly received less education thus, concepts need to be explained in a way to accommodate that. Which could have been true when this article was published in 1999, due to poor accommodation for Deaf people in education but in current times advancements in Deaf education have allowed for this statement to be wholly untrue. Aside from that reasoning, there is a point to ensuring that all parties involved in a conversation understand what is occurring, purely to ensure that the communication is functioning reliably and consistently. Further, due to the fact that interpreting in outdoor recreation is a smaller field, there are even fewer qualified interpreters available, and even less knowledge about how to work with an interpreter and Deaf consumers. Thus, the issues that are outlined in the article, though seen more infrequently, are much more severe.

DC-S observations and Discussions

All of these observations were conducted using the Demand Control Schema (DC-S). An ethical analysis tool developed by Robyn Dean and Robert Pollard. The observations outlined below are going to utilize this framework to explore the demands that arise in each setting as well as some of the potential demands that could come up in each setting. In observations, the specific DC-S form was filled out to support clarity and understanding in future analysis, however for the purposes of this, all observations have been shared in a summarized format that does not reflect the exact DC-S form.

In these observations, it should be noted that they reflect one experience of each of these environments. It is impossible to replicate a comprehensive experience in any outdoor setting as there are an infinite number of variables that are going to affect the situations and each individual involved. All notes and explanations of these demand categories are made in an attempt to bring awareness to the possibilities of what can occur in these environments. As well, all personal details relating to any observation have been removed or edited for confidentiality.

For these trips in particular, being an expert in the sport is less imperative to communication. Having the physical ability to confidently complete the activity will reduce many demands that pop up. Not to say that an interpreter should be able to complete the activity without struggle. However, as much as the physical load can be reduced, it will allow for more ability to focus on communication, and the mental load of the job. With exceptions, not a lot of knowledge about these specific activities were

necessary as all of the vocabulary and unique concepts were explained as they came up. As is commonly understood in the interpreting field, as much knowledge as possible is the best way to support the most optimal outcome. For these beginning trips, often vocabulary and concepts are explained as they come up and the primary goal is educating participants and providing a fun environment thus making it less knowledge based and more about ability to be comfortable with the activity. This is not to say anyone can pick up work in this setting as anything can happen so an appropriate fit is of utmost importance. Each of these settings vary so widely, knowledge is an imperative part of making communication in this environment successful. The goal of this sentiment and the observations to follow is to encourage more interpreters who are outdoor enthusiasts to feel comfortable educating themselves to take on work in these settings.

In the DC-S, analysis is broken down into demand categories, one of those being intrapersonal demands or demands that arise within oneself. In any outdoor environment, intrapersonal demands are going to feel like one of the most present demands, as a lot of outdoor fun is often regarded as more “type 2 fun”. With that, as can be expected, intrapersonal demands are going to vary person to person. One intrapersonal demand that may come up for many interpreters in this setting may have to do with the issue of role, a discussion that frequently comes up in this field. Per the setting, interpreters are also partaking in the activity as well as responsible for the participants’ safety, to a certain extent, on top of working in the interpreter role. In these situations outlined, the interpreter may feel less responsibility for safety compared to other situations as the guides/leaders on the trips are there to ensure everyone's safety. However, in any outdoor

setting it is culturally understood that everyone looks out for each other to minimize the inherent danger of the activity. Thus some responsibility being placed on the interpreter, as well, the interpreter being the bridge of communication, having an understanding of safety and ensuring the pre-established rules and boundaries are understood will naturally place a responsibility on the interpreter. This discussion is one that definitely needs to be continued and further discussed with consumers as situations come up. However, it is also an important preface to understanding general demands in the environment as it can change what control options are available and appropriate.

Below are observations of guided outings with no interpreter present. First is a mountain bike ride, then a rafting trip, a climbing trip and finally a hike. These were chosen to represent a variety of events that support a general understanding of what outdoor settings could look like. These specific activities were also chosen as they were the most easily accessible to observe, also reflecting the popular spring activities that occur in the Oregon and greater Pacific Northwest area. In further discussion, other considerations to limitations of these observations will be discussed.

Mountain Biking

Environmental

As one may predict, there are a lot of environmental variables to be aware of in this setting. Most generally some environmental variables that can easily become demands are as follows; weather, sight lines, variance in lighting, interruptions from equipment and clarity/interruptions on the trails. In my observations, it seemed that the

environment was posing the most demands. However, there were not a lot of interpersonal demands that arose, which may change the central demand slightly per situation. Environmental demands were noted as the central demand because any other demands that came up in my observations either overlapped with, or stemmed from, environmental variables.

Figure 1.0

There were six riders/participants, one sweep (followed the last person) and one ride leader.

Goal of environment: Safely guide and support beginning riders on a mountain bike ride

Descriptives of the environment/setting	Physical Space
• ~65°F sunny, slight wind chill • Trails well maintained, either clear or pre-established routes to follow • Mix of shade/sun from trees, ever changing sightlines and lighting • Roughly 3 hour excursion altogether • Frequent breaks throughout the ride • Ride up on a wide gravel road, with limited accessibility to cars, can ride 2-3 people wide • Pre/post trail, typically on gravel road open for group to easily congregate • Trails vary in size, riding single file • No forced features, ride arounds available • Equipment (bikes, gloves, packs) impeding adaptability/movement	 <i>Figure 1.1 - taken by author</i>  <i>Figure 1.2 - taken by author</i>

Figure 1.3

Terminology: Words or Phrases			
Berm	Drop	Feature	O.T.B.
Spokes	Send it	Rider back/up	Dropping in
Clips	Pedals	Air	Pop it

Interpersonal/Paralinguistic

As previously mentioned, minimal interpersonal demands came up. A few times within personal conversations that took place throughout the ride, miscommunications occurred due to not being able to hear each other, however all were resolved with minimal interruption/impact on the interaction. Due to the ride leaders' experience in this area, all of their communication was very clear and when needed would intentionally only address part of the group then shift to address the other part of the group to ensure information was easily understood by all rather than passed around. With that, while there was a lot of vocabulary, the ride leader ensured that all vocabulary was clearly explained as this was a beginning level ride. This allowed for conversations to flow smoothly and reduce any misunderstandings that may have occurred. Below is a summary of some of the conversations that took place. Personal conversations consistently were occurring, however not all of them were able to be recorded.

Figure 1.4

RL and R will be used in reference to the ride leader and the riders.

What Happened?	What was said?
The ride leader introduced themselves and went over the plan for the ride.	- RL shared their name, their experience with mountain biking as well as the trails they were going to ride, emphasizing safety and going over a brief safety plan. - RL explained that they were going to ride up a trail called "dog patch" and then ride up the road to "red rock" taking plenty of breaks along the way. - RL shared that they would be going down "unemployment line (U-Line)" and "Cedar dust jump lines" but also assured that they would be explained each trail further as they got to them.

Conversation between riders on the ride up the mountain.	- R1 and R2 expressed that they were shocked going up on the trail was so fun - R3 asked R4 what snacks they brought, and were eager to steal some snacks from them later
The ride leader gives the riders some tips before dropping in on the first trail.	- RL explains that this trail is very “flowy” and it will be to the riders benefit to stay nimble, off the seat, and “trust the bike” - RL says that they will lead and the rest of the riders can figure out their order based on how fast they want to/will go. - RL clarifies that safety is a top priority and discussed the three options riders have if they do not feel confident in a section of trail(get off and walk, ride around it, or wait for RL to come by and work though it quick)
The ride leader introduced the “cedar dust jump lines” and participants asked questions.	- RL explained that there are three different options for trails. The green line, blue line and the black line. Raging from easiest to hardest. - R2 asked if they could only do one, RL explained that they can lap them for a bit until everyone feels satisfied - R3 asked how they should get back, RL explained that they will wait at the bottom for everyone the ride up together for the first one then let everyone go on their own
At the end of the ride the ride leader asked everyone to share one thing they learned and one fun movement from the day	- RL shared their appreciation for the riders and their positive attitudes and requested that everyone share something that they learned as well as a fun or positive thing from the ride - R1 shared that they learned more about how to not only keep but gain speed on “berms” and they had a good time on the jump lines earlier - R2 echoed R1’s fun moment and shared that they felt much more comfortable on their bike to “hit” harder sections of the trail - R3,4,5 all agreed with the fun moment that the jump lines were the highlight - R3 added that they learned how to hit a jump better - R4 added that they felt better about wood features and their ability to ride them

	- R5 added that they enjoyed the entire ride and appreciated the other riders fun energy as well, sharing they learned how to use their clipless pedals to their advantage
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As previously explained, many of the environmental demands have the ability to become other demands. One of those being paralinguistic, some pre-existing paralinguistic demands that can come up are as follows; needing to hold on to the bike, riders wearing gloves, full face helmets, elbow pads restricting movement. While each of those can easily be addressed by taking something off or putting something down, it does not mean that it will be by others choices or necessarily be possible in every situation.

While all of the interactions explained above went smoothly and the ride leader was able to facilitate clear communication, there is a lot of potential for interpersonal demands to arise in these situations. Much of those come from other people's attitudes, especially near the end of the day people may be feeling tired thus more irritable, or if someone is feeling nervous about this activity, there is more of an opportunity for a direct interpersonal demand to come up. As briefly explained, there is a large potential for miscommunication to occur due to the nature of the activity. Often, individuals are aware of this and are able to mitigate or be patient with each other, but it may not come as a common understanding for everyone as it is a cultural habit within the community.

Intrapersonal

In thinking about preparing for an excursion such as this one, it is important to ensure that there is at least a basic understanding of the sport as well as a confidence in

one's physical ability to complete the activity. Having knowledge and physical ability will immediately reduce interpersonal demands that could come up throughout the job. In outdoor jobs, it is important to prepare mentally for the greater cognitive load, but also to physically support basic personal needs. Things like warmth, food, water that may not even be thought of in a more everyday job, need to be considered due to length and physical requirements of the work. Having access to preparation before the job, such as meeting with the guides and/or the consumers to figure out how best to support yourself as well as the consumer can also reduce intrapersonal demands.

Rafting

Environmental

In this setting, the environment brings an interesting contrast. The setup of the raft will be fairly similar situation to situation as a raft does not have much opportunity for extreme modifications that would impact communication. However, being on the river and outside in general is often quite unpredictable, making the potential volatility in the environment high. In my observations, the environment, while posing many challenges, was not un-manageable. This could be due to the fact that this is a beginning trip so much of the conditions were geared towards people who have never been rafting. With that, this environment also poses an interesting challenge in that a lot of the environment is set as it is and cannot be adjusted to reduce demands.

Figure 2.0

There were 4 guides, each with their own rafting group with 6 people in each boat.

Goal of environment: Provide a fun and safe environment for participants guiding them down a day trip on the river.

Descriptives of the environment/setting	Physical Space
• ~65°F mostly sunny, warmer on land compared to on the water • Water temp about 55°F • Mild wind chill at certain points • On land ○ Clear sight lines ○ Easy for group to gather ○ Open areas • On the water ○ In the raft, pre-set seating ○ Holding paddles ○ Guide sitting behind participants, verbal commands ○ Not always paddling, longer moments of conversation throughout ○ Noise from river/nature around ○ Wide open area, can be hard to hear if people are not looking at each other	 Figure 2.1 - sage canyon rafting  Figure 2.2 - imperial rafting

Figure 2.3

Terminology: Words or Phrases			
Class 1-5	Paddle(noun/verb)	Raft	Rapids
PFD	Swimmer	Throw bag	Eddy
Standers (waves)	Ride the bull	Deschutes(river)	Maupin (place)
Local Tribes	(get) Down	Boof	Hole

Interpersonal/Paralinguistic

In this situation, there were few interpersonal demands that arose. From my observations the primary interpersonal demand was ability to hear each other. The guide

was really good about projecting and annunciating, however amongst the boat, often participants would misunderstand each other. As well at the moments where all of the rafts were gathered together it was significantly more difficult to hear people from other rafts unless they were side by side (docked up). This rafting trip was an excursion on a three-day camping trip. There were two participants on this trip that frequently had disagreements, should they have been in the same raft, an issue could have come up causing more interpersonal demands.

Figure 2.4

S, RG and P will be used in reference to the Staff, Raft Guide(s) and the Participants

What Happened?	What was said?
Staff oriented participants to rafting, organizing for participants to get on buses	- S1 shared their thanks for the group joining them on the trip. - S1 quickly went over the plan explaining that there would be a lunch break just over half way down the river. Then the trip would end and buses would bring them back to the office.
Guides outlined the plan for the trip, put people in boats and ensured that everyone had proper gear as well as explaining safety for the trip.	- G1 introduced themselves and the other guides then instructed participants to get a lifejacket and a paddle off the trailer then get into groups of 6 - G2 explained safety protocol, such as how to re-enter the raft should anyone fall out and how to safely float down the river.
Guides started with explaining commands to the boat and went around asking participants to introduce themselves	- G1 re-introduced themselves and allows those in the boat to do the same asking each for their rafting/paddling experience - Participants went around the raft sharing their name and that they have been rafting but only once or twice no-one noting an excessive amount of experience - G1 explained that while they are going along the river, there will be rapids each separated by class. G1 elaborated that thought the trip they may call out various things such as

	paddle, or specific slides to paddle as well as get down when going through rapids.
Guide introduced the hardest rapid they would be going down, explain how they planned to approach it	- G1 explained that this rapid was a class IV being the hardest one the group will go through today. So when they say to paddle, the group should paddle hard to get through it then get down when instructed. - G1 explained that their boat will be the first to go through so they need to be ready to watch for the other boats in case they flip or get stuck so they will pull off to the side after they get through it.
Guides gathered groups during lunch asking which part was their favorite and further explaining what the rest of the trip would look like.	- G2 talks to participants as they eat, asking which part has been their favorite so far, suggesting the class IV they just went down. - Participants share various parts of the trip as their favorite, most of them also pointing that the class IV was within the ranking of favorites. - G3 shares that they also love going down that rapid, then going on to explain that the rest of the trip will be pretty relaxed and fun with opportunities to jump in and swim.

Some paralinguistic considerations for this environment are also tied to the environment. One main example is holding a paddle; accommodations can easily be made so that dropping a paddle does not need to be a worry, however if not, it may be harder to comfortably set down the paddle impeding signing ability. As lifejackets (PFDs) are required with activities such as this, depending on the individual and the style of PFD, that may also reduce signing space. On this trip specifically, the weather was quite nice. With that, participants still got cold at some points, which did/could interfere with speech and signing abilities even in warmer weather. Another paralinguistic demand

that can come from the environment would be if a participant were to end up in the water, impacting both signed and possibly spoken language.

Intrapersonal

In this setting, intrapersonal demands are going to be significantly harder to apply controls to. As is true with many other outdoor settings, most intrapersonal demands are going to need to be controlled pre or post assignment. Some general intrapersonal demands that may arise to consider are as follows; nerves/adrenaline, physical senses/dysregulation, and exhaustion. Naturally these demands are going to show in different ways and at different severities per the person, but having an awareness of the possibility that these things could come up, allows us to preemptively build support within ourselves to mitigate the impact these demands have on ourselves and the interactions.

Climbing

Environmental

When climbing outdoors or even indoors, the environment can be quite restrictive. With that, there are alterations to communication that can be made to minimize the effect of various environmental demands, many of those demands also showing up as paralinguistic demands. In this instance, the weather was quite nice, however it is also important to remember that being on the ground versus being on the wall at height can change the feel of any temperature dramatically. Also increasing the need to be aware of the temperature and be ready to accommodate the changes in temperature throughout the

day. In this setting there are a lot of slang terms that exist that would be important to have an understanding of beforehand, even more so than other outdoor environments. Below are terms that will be beneficial to understand for the purpose of this discussion:

Top Rope: A form of climbing in which the climber and belayer act in a pulley system with the anchor point above the climber or at the top of the route.

Belayer: The individual taking slack out of the rope for the climber as they move up

Belay: The act of taking slack out of the rope as the climber moves upwards

Crag: A location at which climbing routes have been established

Figure 3.0

There were 8 participants, two staff leaders for the group as well as two climbing leaders, specifically there for climbing.

Goal of environment: Lead climbers on a fun top rope climbing excursion, prioritizing safety and wellbeing of participants

Descriptives of the environment/setting	Physical Space
● ~70°F ● Smith rock state park, common destination for climbers ● Climbing conditions/at the crag ○ Two separate areas, separated by a boulder ○ Challenging sight lines ○ Three ropes set on one side and one set on the other ○ Mostly consistent lighting, shifting throughout the day ○ Primarily shade, with areas of sun ○ Cooler temperatures ● Hiking conditions ○ Warmer more direct sunlight ○ Wider maintained trails ○ “Scramble” or walk down to the crag	 <i>Figure 3.1 - taken by author</i>  <i>Figure 3.2 - taken by author</i>

Figure 3.3

Terminology: Words or Phrases			
Crag	Top Rope	Lead (climbing)	Belay
Chalk	5.8 etc.(ratings)	Anchor	Take
S.T.O.P	Pumped	Pack it out	Carabiner

Interpersonal/Paralinguistic

In my experience in this setting, there were not a lot of interpersonal demands that came up. In the climbing world, communication has been pre-established to reduce the number of miscommunications, however as a lot of that is verbal communication it would be important to ensure that there is communication set to accommodate visual communication. I will note that while this is something that should be established with the consumer, there are Deaf climbers that have established some visual terminology that could be a good resource. In this group, there were two group leaders in addition to the two who were hired to lead the group in climbing. While no issues arose from that, it could have caused confusion for who handles what in a situation that requires a more authoritative figure.

Figure 3.4

CL, GL and P will be used in reference to the climbing leaders, group leaders and the participants

What Happened?	What was said?
The trip leader went over expectations and rules with the participants before heading to the crag.	- CL1 reminded participants of the rules of the trail and the “crag” sharing three simple rules to guide them. - CL1 explained the three rules as follows; S.T.O.P an acronym meaning stop, think, observe, plan. Leave no trace, meaning clean up after yourself and do not disrupt the environment. Finally L.I.B.K meaning let it be known.

	- CL1 confirms with everyone that they understand, P's confirm and CL1 elected CL2 to lead the group to the climbing spot (the crag)
The trip leaders supported the participants down a "scramble" to get to the wall.	- CL1 paused the group and explained that they would go down in a line with them leading. - CL2 added that the scramble is not that bad but it can be intimidating - CL2 also mentioned that there was an alternate route should people decide they prefer that - GL 1 said that they would walk with those who preferred to walk the other way
Participants discussed the climbing routes, general conversation.	- P1 asked CL2 which route they think they should climb. CL2 gave them a suggestion to start easier than what they do in the gym as it is an adjustment to climbing outside - P3 asked P4 if they wanted to go around the boulder to climb the other route, they agreed. P1 overheard and told them to wait up so they could be over there with them.
At the end of the day, trip leaders made sure everyone was ready to walk back to the cars.	- CL1 checked in with the group to see if they were ready to be done or if they wanted ten more minutes. P5 requested a few more minutes - CL1 requested those that were done clean up, and do a walk though to make sure that the group has left no trace. - GL2 announced to the group again to make sure they cleaned up after themselves

As one could expect, many of the paralinguistic demands that arise in this setting are primarily going to be a result of the environment. As mentioned, Deaf climbers have loosely established signs and signals that can be used to reduce the impact of the hands on nature of this sport. In turn that can reduce the demands that arise from the environment thus fewer demands becoming paralinguistic demands. With that, there will be times when the environment/communication cannot be altered thus creating a much

more impacting paralinguistic demand. Thinking about a top rope excursion such as this one, climbing participants are able to let go of the wall as needed and communicate.

However, the belayer is not able to let go of the rope, making a back and forth in communication difficult. While there are other examples of paralinguistics that arise due to environmental/equipment interruptions, this example is going to be the most common.

Intrapersonal

In this setting, intrapersonal demands, similarly to other settings, are going to depend on one's comfortability and awareness in the setting. Climbing is inherently dangerous and is based on a lot of calculated risk that can make a lot of people uncomfortable if they are not familiar with the sport. Climbing is unique in that the interpreter in this situation does not need to participate in the sport. In the discussion below, there will be further discussion on this, however, this flexibility allows for more control options to be employed. With that, it is important to consider some possible intrapersonal demands that may arise such as; physical discomfort with positioning/sight lines, role questions as climbing culture is often much more casual and community based making the clear interpreter role harder to define and maintain as well as other intrapersonal demands that may arise due to the environment and nature of the activity.

Hiking

Environmental

In comparison to other outdoor recreational activities the environment does not create nearly as many demands. With that it should be understood that the environment is

always going to play a role in and impact interactions in the outdoor recreation setting; hiking at an established state park will have fewer significant demands that arise due to the environment. It should also be noted that hikes are often going to be regarded as a more entry level activity within the outdoor community. Knowing that, for interpreters, this can be quite the misnomer. As we all are accustomed to, there is no “easy” or “no big deal” job. For this specific observation the hike was in fact a much more established trail, that the trip leaders were familiar with allowing for the environment to stay pretty predictable especially with the leaders being familiar with the hike.

Figure 4.0

On this trip there were eight hikers and two trip leaders.

Goal of the Environment: Safely guide participants on a fun hike though silver falls state park.

Descriptives of the environment/setting	Physical Space
● ~50°F mostly sunny ● Silver Falls state park, popular outdoor recreation location in the area ● Multi-use recreation park ○ Horseback riding, camping, hiking, mountain biking, swimming ● Maintained trails or solid pavement ○ Maintained trails are skinner ○ Paved trails are wider ● Trail mostly in shade, few spots of sun ● Loop trail with different options for length ● Sections of trail more technically challenging than others ● Plenty of opportunity for breaks along the trail	 <i>Figure 4.1 - taken by author</i>  <i>Figure 4.2 - taken by author</i>

Figure 4.3

Terminology: Words or Phrases			
Loop trail	Various wildlife	Various plant names	Invasive/native
“Pack it out”	Rim trail	Trial of ten falls	The lodge
The canyon (trail)	Waterfall	Radio	(park) ranger

Interpersonal/Paralinguistic

With this group, there were no notable interpersonal interactions that came up. Both of the trip leaders had radios to be able to communicate easily and all of the participants mainly just spoke to those around them. With that, it could have been more challenging had the leaders not had radios. Being outside, on a popular trail, with waterfalls and rivers running near the trail, the potential for something being misheard or miscommunicated is pretty high. Although on this particular outing there were not very many interpersonal demands that arose, some considerations that could impact interpersonal demands are going to be; the length/intensity of the outing, individuals experience/understanding in the environment, as well as the level/number of demands that the environment brings up.

Figure 4.4

“TL” and “H” will be used in reference to the Trip Leaders and the Hikers.

What Happened?	What was said?
Trip leaders gathered the group to review expectations and trail etiquette	- TL1 quickly reviews what they had previously discussed before they left, noting specifically to be respectful of others on the trail as this is a popular hike, to clean up after themselves and each other as to not harm the environment. Concluding their statements with be safe and have fun. - TL2 added to see if participants had any further questions.

	- H1 asked about lunch plans - TL2 explained that they will stop half way though or whenever people request to break for lunch
Trip leader 2 stopped the group to let everyone catch up and played an impromptu game of “guess that plant”	- TL2 paused the group to ensure everyone stayed together - TL2 started a game of what plant is this, asking participants to guess what they were pointing at - H2 shared they thought it was a cedar tree - H3 was shocked by their answer and suggested that it may be a big leaf maple - TL2 confirmed they were right - H3 asked if they were going to receive a prize - TL2 sarcastically replied, their prize is the joy of knowledge asking if anyone wanted to keep playing as they walked
Trip leaders radio to ask about taking a lunch break	- TL1 asked TL2 to check in with their group about a lunch break while they did the same with the hikers close to them - Both determined that no one was all that enthusiastic about finding a spot to eat immediately so they decided to continue on until the rough half way point.
Trip leaders paused to check in to see if hikers wanted to take the longer or the shorter route	- TL1 asks the group if they would like to continue on and take the longer loop or if they would prefer to take the shorter loop back to the car - TL2 adds more detail sharing exactly how much longer the longer loop is and that they will see a few more water falls should they go that way - The group discusses and ends up deciding to take the longer loop
Trip leaders gather the group at the vans to let them know to use the bathroom and such before the trip back.	- TL2 reminds everyone to adjust their layers to be comfortable on the drive back as well as reminding people to use the restroom - Everyone discussed their favorite parts of the hike and shared pictures with each other

In this setting there are significantly fewer paralinguistic demands that arose compared to other settings. As hikes can vary in degree of difficulty, this can quickly change from situation to situation. On this hike in particular most demands were related to the environment and did not cross over into the paralinguistic category. Some paralinguistic considerations that could potentially come up in this setting are going to be based much more on the individuals rather than other demands that arise and become paralinguistic demands.

Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal demands that arise in this setting are likely going to be easier to address due to the adaptability of this environment. As discussed, hikes can vary quite widely so this is not going to reflect other more difficult hikes/situations. However, for this hike in particular the environment and overall situation allows for accommodations and adaptations to be made in order to support individuals as needed within reason. Many intrapersonal demands that are going to arise will likely stem from the environment and/or interpersonal conflicts.

Discussion

In these observations, it should be noted that there are limitations to what was observed. First, all of these activities took place from May to October at the latest. In the area and days these activities took place, the weather had only a mild impact. With outdoor activities, the weather should be a consideration as noted in these months, however it would also be beneficial to explore activities that take place in winter months

or in areas with more extreme weather. While many activities will primarily take place in the warmer spring-fall months, guided winter activities are going to pose a much more hostile environment and should be further explored and analyzed to support future interpreting that occurs in those environments. Another limitation to these observations is that these were all done with no interpreter present in the situation. While it does offer some benefit to be able to observe from a theoretical perspective, it is also important to recognize that having an interpreter present would allow for a further analysis and understanding of each setting. Additionally, it should be mentioned that having Deaf consumers in these observations would also allow for further and more cultural perspectives to be brought to the discussion which is a vital part of any interpreted interaction, however due to time constraints and availability of observable events this research was not able to account for that.

Additionally, a few parallels can be drawn between each of these settings. First looking at environmental demands, as they are going to vary incredibly widely. It can be expected that the environment will pose unique demands per situation however, things like weather, general constraints that the activity inherently poses (ie equipment, vocabulary etc), length and intensity of the outing, as well as the location of the outing are going to be common areas that environmental demands will arise. Thus, time and considerations should be preemptively made to mitigate the impact the environment will have on the interaction. Interpersonal demands are going to be less generalizable as it will depend on those involved in the interaction. In thinking about these demands it would be appropriate to prepare for miscommunications due to not being able to hear well, also

other environmental factors that could impact participants moods and attitudes throughout the outing. Paralinguistic demands within these situations frequently arose from the environment which is likely true for a variety of outdoor settings. Paralinguistics are also going to depend on the individuals present but as far as predictable paralinguistic demands, it is reasonable to examine other demand categories and make inferences from there. Intrapersonal demands, as noted, are going to be different from person to person. With that as many outdoor environments are less forgiving to intrapersonal demands, it is important to utilize pre and post assignment control options in addition to making sure that there are opportunities during the assignment to employ control options if the need arises.

Suggestions for Future Practice

A phrase used in various contexts, “Stretch your edge” can easily be applied to a lot of outdoor activities. In interpreting, this phrase can be the simple way to explain the boundaries of comfort that we press to grow in our profession. For those wanting to get into outdoor interpreting, there are going to be various levels of difficulty within each activity and that is an important consideration when entering this work. All of the observations above were geared towards entry level to beginning participants. As the difficulty level increases, to a certain point, the demands that go with the setting are also going to increase. When wanting to “stretch your edge” in entering this work, it is important to do so cautiously and responsibly.

Currently, the website Zaboosh offers workshops for interpreters and interpreters can receive continuing education credit for completing those workshops. One being offered is titled, “Between a rock and a hard place: Interpreting Outdoor Adventures” and is a workshop with Deaf climber Sonya Wilson and Interpreter Eliza Barlow that provides a basic understanding and evaluation of ethical scenarios in outdoor settings for current and future “outdoor adventure interpreters(OAI)”. This is an excellent resource for interpreters and in the future more workshops similar to this one would prove to be an incredible opportunity for interpreters to grow skill and feel comfortable in outdoor environments especially if the workshops are able to be provided in person.

As exorbitantly noted, much of the work in outdoor environments is going to change from situation to situation. With that, as has been shown, adequate preparation for

these assignments is going to prove incredibly beneficial. As outdoor culture is incredibly community based, there is a unique opportunity for an interpreter to utilize that community mindset to support themselves both during the assignment and in preparation for the assignment. While this is not going to be true all of the time as with most things. The culture of outdoor communities is going to be generally supportive and willing to accommodate. Meaning more liberal pre-assignment controls such as being in contact with those involved in planning beforehand, is much more of a viable option compared to other environments. With that, as has been noted, having a team for these situations though will not completely disregard any demands, it will allow for more control options as well as further support for both interpreters and consumers.

This community mindset also comes into play with the culture of communication that surrounds outdoor environments. Outdoor enthusiasts, especially those who take part in the activities that involve more inherent risk, are quite communicative. This is definitely a benefit when it comes to interpreted interactions as there are already established checks that will support communication to not only flow smoothly but also ensure understanding from all parties. This can also pose challenges when it comes to interpreters boundaries, though it depends on the situation and consumers involved, being personable and engaging with this community mindset will likely prove to be more beneficial and conducive to professional boundaries than staying strictly in the interpreter only role.

From these observations, as mentioned, an interesting conversation on role can be brought up. These environments definitely bring up a grey area in the field as there are a

few aspects of being outdoors that make the “im just the interpreter” mindset a barrier to access and consumer autonomy rather than a way to support those things. One good example that can be brought up is with climbing settings. As mentioned, the interpreter technically does not need to participate in the activity to perform the interpreting duties. Making most assume that choosing to put on a harness or partially engage with the activity may cause confusion with boundaries and role. However, the challenge with that is if something were to occur with the Deaf consumer up on the wall, not only is this a moment where having access to communication is imperative but also without the interpreter ready and comfortable to go up the wall communication likely will not happen smoothly leading to further demands. Building off of the preparation aspect of this work, to some extent being prepared for the worst is incredibly important. So that should something happen, not only does one know how to respond but it will be easier to respond to the new set of demands that come up. All to say, this aspect of outdoor interpreting, has a lot of potential for future research and further conclusions to be made. For the time being, it is important to be flexible and adaptable in these settings, while still maintaining clear personal and professional boundaries. As well as ensuring that clear discussions are had with the consumers and interpreters to most effectively manage situations as various demands arise.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this area of interpreting is still very underdeveloped, however in examining other high demand settings and developing further education on the field, there is a lot of potential to support the outdoor recreation industry to become more inclusive and accessible. For future interpreters looking into outdoor recreation settings as well as current interpreters who are outdoor enthusiasts, be considerate when entering fields such as this as it can be misleading. On the other hand, it should also be said that it is important to have those who are willing to enter these specialized fields as it does take a specific person to be willing to do this work. The goal of this research is to inform and inspire others to engage in outdoor environments and support the growth of the Deaf outdoor community.

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