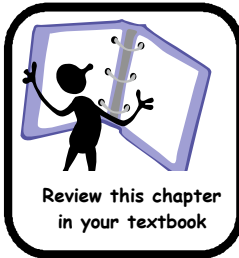## CHAPTER ONE:
The Importance of Communication

Chapter Summary

Interpreters need to understand the nature of communication as a whole and their role as a mediator of communication between two or more people specifically. This chapter takes a look at how messages are constructed, noting the importance of context, speaker/signer goals, the degree of directness in the message and the use of powerful or powerless forms of language.

Review this chapter in your textbook

To Focus Your Study

As you study this chapter, pay particular attention to the following ideas and information.

1. What elements go into effective communication?

2. How can a listener identify the intended message/meaning of another person when involved in an interaction?

3. What does all of this have to do with being an interpreter?

Learning Activities

In Your Own Words

Write in your journal

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: Reflect on your learning in this chapter and record briefly the most significant points learned and why they are important to your journey of learning.

Look at video clip on CD

LEARNING ACTIVITY #2: Review the segment titled "Comments on Communication" in Chapter One of the companion CD. Then develop your own definition for "good communication" and/or "characteristics of a good communicator." Set two goals for yourself that will help you become a more effective communicator.

Communication in Action

ACTIVITY #1: Check the Experts

Review the segments titled "Register," "Powerful/Powerless Language," "Examples of Powerful/Powerless Language," "Affect" and "English Euphemisms." Paraphrase each of these concepts before beginning Activity #2.

Look at video clip on CD

ACTIVITY #2: Observing Communication

OBSERVE

Spend one weekend (or a couple of hours over 2-3 days) taking notes on the communication going on around you. Try to spend time in at least 3 different settings with different communication partners. Once your observation is complete, share your experiences with your learning partner. Note similarities and differences in the observations each of you made. Be sure to record your observations and include the following information:

1. CONTEXT — For each observation, write down WHERE the interaction was happening? WHO was involved (gender, approximate age, role if any is evident)? What was the RELATIONSHIP among the participants? Your best guess as to WHY this communication is taking place.

2. LINGUISTIC REGISTER — Identify the linguistic register being used by each participant. Do the registers match the setting? If not, any guesses as to why they don't? Are the participants all using the same register?

3. AFFECT — What emotive overlay did you observe? Was it stated overtly or implied? If implied, how (gestures, tone of voice, etc.)? If overtly stated, were there other feelings in addition to those stated?

4. COMMUNICATION GOALS — Identify at least 3 communication goals in each setting. How were you able to determine these goals? Were they stated outright? Or did you deduce them? If you just figured them out, how did you do that? From the setting? From the tone of voice or a gesture? By drawing on your own experience in this setting or type of interaction?

5. TURN TAKING — In each interaction, note the style of turn taking used by each participant. Does one person tend to cut the other off to interject their own ideas or to ask a question? If so, how frequently? How do you think this style of turn taking affects the interaction?

6. LISTENING STYLE — Does the person taking in information tend to ask clarifying or probing questions to draw out more information or to insure s/he is understanding what the speaker is saying clearly? Is the listener summarizing what s/he is hearing to verify accuracy before responding? If so, how do you think this style of listening affects the interaction?

7. DEGREE OF DIRECTNESS — You've already looked for this within "affect" but now look at the overall interaction. Did you notice any equivocal information? Abstract language? Euphemistic phrases or terms?

8. POWERFUL/POWERLESS FORMS OF LANGUAGE — Make note of any powerless forms of language observed including: hedges, hesitations, intensifiers, polite forms, tag questions or up talk, or disclaimers. How did the use of these forms influence the interaction observed?

COMMUNICATION OBSERVATION FORM

(Print off multiple copies and take with you for your observation weekend)

|	
Where taking place	Who is involved
Content (summary of what was said)	
Linguistic Register Matches setting?	Affect – overt or implied? Clues
PERSON A: Communication Goals 1. 2. 3.	PERSON B: Communication Goals 1. 2. 3.
Turn Taking Styles	Listening Style
Degree of Directness	Powerful/Powerless Forms

Speaker Styles

ACTIVITY #3: Comparing Speaker Styles

Watch/listen to the several video clips made by Sara, Al, Barb and Anne in various chapters throughout the set of companion CDs, then compare their styles of speech.

Look at video clip on CD

1. Is there an affective overlay? If so, how do you know — through vocal intonation? Word choice? Gestures? Other clues?

2. Do you hear powerful/powerless language forms? Please identify each.

3. What is your impression of each person based solely on the language samples? Are they self-doubting or uncertain? Knowledgeable? Shy?

4. If you were interpreting for these individuals, would you have visual language strategies to convey these various speaker styles?

5. Identify three ways you can develop these skills.
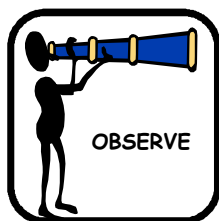
Linguistic Registers

OBSERVE

Observe your own communication over the next week. Notice where you use different linguistic registers. Based on your own communication style, complete the following chart.

REGISTER USED:	*Formal*	*Consultative*	*Informal*
SETTING	Where: Who was involved?	Where: Who was involved?	Where: Who was involved?
Turn-taking			
Sentence structure			
Vocabulary			
Volume/speed			
Topics permitted			

Study
Questions

Study Questions

1. Identify five *communication goals* and explain how each goal might be reflected in speaker/signer behaviors.

GOAL	Speaker/Signer Behavior
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. *Linguistic register* refers to the way language is used to … (circle all that apply):

   (a) Indicate whether two individuals are members of the same family

   (b) Mark psychological distance between the participants in a communication event

   (c) Cue observers to the type of setting in which the communication is taking place

   (d) Mark the degree of formality inherent in the communication exchange

   (e) Communicate in formal settings only

3. *Paralinguistic features* of communication carry the majority of meanings and include such things as … (circle all that apply):

   (a) Frozen register elements of all languages

   (b) Affect markers

   (c) Emergency medical terminology

   (d) Vocal intonation/sign inflection

   (e) Gestures and other non-verbal behaviors

4. Hedging refers to … (circle all that apply):

   (a) Fillers preceding or during an utterance

   (b) Qualifiers that weaken the statement being made

   (c) Such phrases as "sort of," "kind of," "I guess"

   (d) A language form that makes the speaker sound confident and sure of her/himself

   (e) Unnecessary modifiers added to an utterance that obscure the message.

5. Equivocal language refers to … (circle all that apply);

   (a) Vague or unclear terms or phrases

   (b) Socially acceptable terms and phrases used in place of more direct or descriptive terms

   (c) Terms or phrases that can be interpreted in more than one way; used in order to mislead someone

   (d) A form of "verbal shorthand" allowing communication without going through a detailed list of items

   (e) All of the above

6. Match the following forms of speech with "E" for euphemism and "P" for powerless form:

    _____ Her brother passed away last week.

    _____ Where's the ladies room?

    _____ I …uh … I haven't … or I mean … Could I please … if you don't mind … ask you a favor?

    _____ Oh! A new hair do!

    _____ It's so absolutely, very, amazingly wonderful!

7. Complete the following chart with information regarding the *linguistic registers* identified, noting the language used, turn-taking norms and acceptable or typical topics for each register.

REGISTER	NORMS
Informal	Language Used: Turn-Taking Norms: Typical Topics:
Formal	Language Used: Turn-Taking Norms: Typical Topics:
Consultative	Language Used: Turn-Taking Norms: Typical Topics: