









**Beppie van den Bogaerde** started out as a translator/interpreter of English/Dutch, and graduated as a psycholinguist in 1989. In 2000 her PhD dissertation titled *Input and interaction in deaf families* was published. Since 1997 she has been working at the Institute for Sign, Language & Deaf Studies of

Hogeschool Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. Together with many colleagues she established the 4-yrs bachelor degree programs for teachers and interpreters in Dutch Sign Language (NGT) in 1997, followed by the master programs Deaf Studies and Teacher NGT in 2005. In 2007 she was appointed Associate Professor of Deaf Studies at UUAS, where she is doing research with her co-researchers, with a focus on the use of NGT, Deaf culture and interpreting issues.

## Keynote presentation efsli trainers' seminar – “Voicing Barriers”

**A → B** The Russian theory on interpreting maintains that interpreting from your A language (native language) into your B language (fluent second or foreign language) is preferred, because one has a native comprehension of the A language. Since "no one is exempt from comprehension problems and [...] one cannot interpret what one has not understood, the comprehension phase must be given priority over production" (Martin 2005). When the message in the source language is easily understood, more accurate interpreting into the target language is possible (from A into B). **B → A** Seleskovitch (e.g. 1989) (Paris' school) claims the opposite: it is better (or easier) to interpret from the B language (e.g. BSL) into the A-language (English) because it is quicker/easier to find the right equivalents in your native tongue whilst translating. It is widely accepted that simultaneous instruction should begin with teaching into A so that the students can focus on processing techniques rather than worrying about expression. Both schools assume high proficiency in the B language, of course. And here, I fear, lies the crux of the problems that sign language interpreters (SLI's) have in the process of interpreting from signed into spoken language (voicing).

The CEFR-L (Common European Framework of languages) recognizes six levels of language fluency.

Basic User		Independent user		Proficient user	
Breakthrough	Waystage	Threshold	Vantage	Effective Operational Proficiency	Mastery
					

In 1996 Jacobs compared the learning of ASL for students with a western language background (English, German, Dutch, French and such) to the learning of Chinese or Arabic, languages from a totally different linguistic type (category 4). She continues to discuss that ASL for students with an English background also counts as a Category 4 language in terms of degree of difficulty. She estimated that to learn those language on a proficiency level, it would require a student with average language learning aptitude approximately 1320 language contact hours (p. 185). Most training courses in the West do not offer that many hours of language contact or training – so why are we surprised that the signed fluency of our students and of ourselves as interpreters is not up to simultaneous interpreting level? We need to make more use of the hours available to us and focus on providing input, input, input: *comprehension first, production second*.

In this keynote I will go into more details in how we can achieve better comprehension of signed source texts, which hopefully will lead to better voicing practices.

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