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DEMAND CONSTELLATIONS

KEY CONCEPTS

Main demands are almost always interpersonal demands (what happened and what was said/signed) and require a response from the interpreter, even if it is to do nothing.

Concurrent demands influence the main demand in important ways and flesh out the entire situational context.

Demand constellations is a construct that can be used to structure "it depends" dialogues in interpreter education, which improves learning.

When demand constellations cannot be built slowly in the classroom, understanding the full context for a given decision can often happen through reflective practice.

At the end of Chapter 5, we introduced the term *constellation of demands*. In DC-S, this term is used to convey the idea that more than one demand needs to be identified before control decisions can be considered, evaluated, and employed. One demand, presented outside of its broader context, does not provide enough information for an interpreter to know what to do. You may have had the experience of asking an instructor or colleague "what would you do if…" followed by naming an interpreting demand (for example, being unable to hear the speaker) and received the response, "Well, it depends…" What usually follows this statement is a discussion regarding other potential, relevant contextual factors (demands), before reasonable control options can be identified. These other relevant factors, along with the demand which sparked your question, constitute the constellation of demands. The constellation of demands is a construct (or device) for identifying and enumerating all the contextual factors that are important in making a given control decision.

Demand constellations are made up of two parts – the *main* demand and *concurrent* demands. Main demands usually constitute the "what happened" or "what was said" of an interpreting situation. They are the central focus of "it depends" questions because they require that the interpreter directly respond (employ controls) even if that response is to do nothing. In the vast majority of circumstances, main demands are from the interpersonal demand category. From the science class scenario, you likely identified some interpersonal demands that were main demands (e.g., the teacher asks the interpreter to go over the dissection instructions again). However, all interpersonal demands are not main demands. Interpersonal demands that describe another's thought world or their communication objectives are also important but generally would not arise in the form of main demands. They usually "surround" and influence the main demand and thus constitute concurrent demands.

Concurrent demands can be environmental, interpersonal, or paralinguistic demands (though, ideally, not intrapersonal demands) and literally reflect factors that are happening at the same time as (i.e., they are *concurrent* with) the main demand. Because of how they influence or "spin" the main demand, concurrent demands require careful consideration in assessing how best to respond to the main demand they relate to. Again, we use the term "constellation of demands" to refer to the main demand and all the concurrent demands that are influencing it. We often use the following graphic to represent the constellation of demands, though the number of concurrent demands will vary.
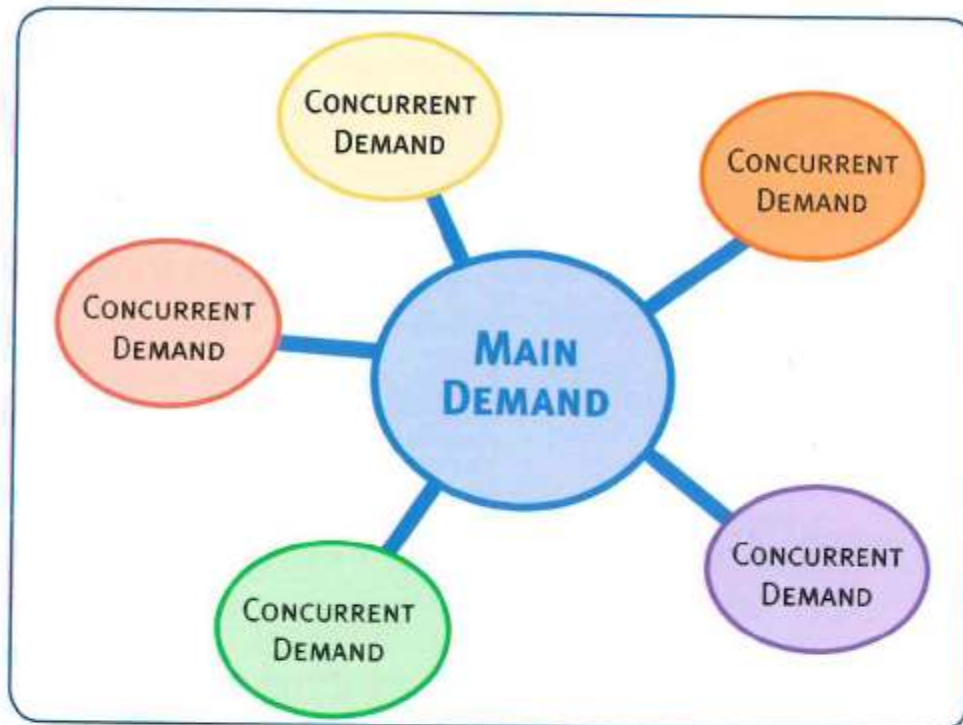
Not all demands that are happening at the same time as the main demand need to be included in the constellation of demands, only those that directly pertain to and influence the main demand. That being said, certain interpersonal demands are always relevant to the main demand, that is, they are always included in the constellation of demands. These include: demands that reflect the goal of the environment, the thought worlds of the consumers, and the consumers' goals or communication objectives.

Before we present examples of main and concurrent demands, we want to emphasize that the thoughtful inclusion of contextual factors in decision-making (which a teleological approach requires) is already a familiar aspect of ethical and effective practice dialogues in interpreting. This is exactly what is happening during "it depends" dialogues between teachers and students, or interpreter colleagues. However, we also are suggesting that the construct of demand constellations (main and concurrent demands) is a useful way to structure these "it depends" conversations and facilitates the learning and decision-making process. Moreover, the structure offered by these DC-S concepts enhances one's ability to *predict* or anticipate all the important factors that require consideration in an interpreting situation.

Consider the examples below which reframe the "it depends..." dialogue in terms of the main and concurrent demand structure.

Main Demand	Concurrent Demands
"What would you do if..."	**"It depends on..."**
...the hearing speaker moves into the visual space between you and the deaf person?	If this is the first time it has happened... How long the hearing person stays there... If the deaf person is likely to intervene... What the person is saying at the moment it happens... If you are standing or sitting... How much attention the deaf person wants drawn to themselves and the interpreting process...
...the deaf person asks you to explain his symptoms to a new doctor who just joined the other doctors in the room?	If the interpreter knows the deaf person well... If the deaf person's hands or upper body are constrained by pain or other factors... How many times the interpreter already has interpreted the symptoms to other doctors...
...the team interpreter you are working with suggests using a specific sign?	If it is a sign you already know... If it is a sign the deaf person is not familiar with... If it differs from another sign which already has been established in the assignment... Which of the two interpreters has the most precedent with the setting or the consumers...

Just as in the example from Chapter 5 ("What do you do when you can't hear the speaker?"), whenever an interpreting practice dilemma is posed, it is usually a main demand. When a main demand is identified *outside* its full constellation (i.e., without the concurrent demands), many control options are possible, but choosing between them remains elusive until the concurrent demands are identified. In Chapter 5, we listed over ten potential control options (and there are even more than that!) that might be acceptable within the liberal to conservative spectrum to respond to the main demand of being unable to hear the speaker. They were:
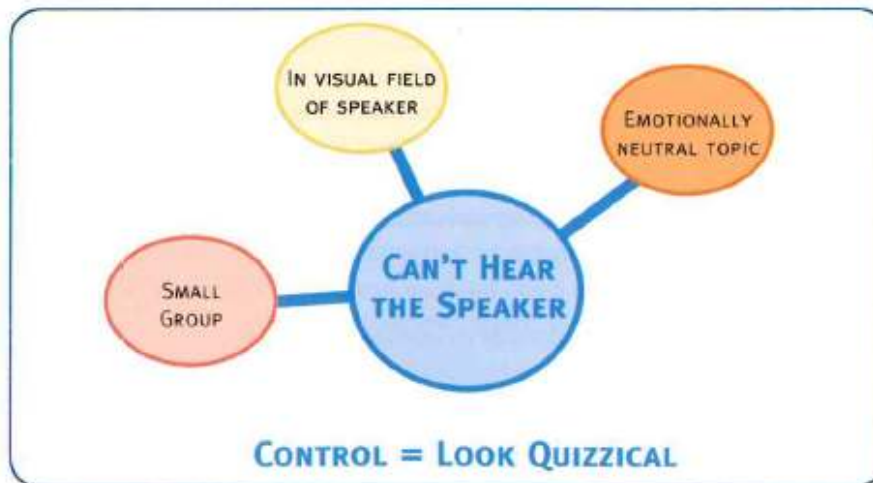
- Ask the speaker to repeat
- Tell the deaf person you cannot hear
- Ask the deaf person what to do
- Move to a better location
- Ask the group facilitator to repeat what the person said

- Ask the speaker to talk louder

- Alter the acoustics so your hearing improves (e.g., close a door or window)

- Use "closure skills" and make an educated guess about what was said

- Omit the content you didn't hear

- Narrate the heard and unheard comments using third person ("He said [xyz] but I didn't catch the rest.")

- Give visual cues to the speaker that you cannot hear (cup your ear, lean in, look quizzical)

- Refer to any visual or written material to help determine what the speaker may have said

- Ask the person next to you what the speaker said

- Look directly at the speaker (orient face-to-face); read the speaker's lips

In order to identify which of many potential control options are most likely to be effective (and ethical), concurrent demands need to be identified.

To illustrate the importance of concurrent demands, consider some different possible demand constellations that would lead to each of the of the control options mentioned above being a wise and effective choice. That is, invent different concurrent demands that, if they were present, would result in each control choice "making good sense" in that situation. Remember, the main demand is the same in all cases – the interpreter can't hear the speaker.

Here are a few examples. Given the control choice of "give visual cues (cup your ear, lean in, look quizzical)," what concurrent demands would need to be present to make that control an effective choice? Consider the following demand constellation:

IN VISUAL FIELD OF SPEAKER

EMOTIONALLY NEUTRAL TOPIC

SMALL GROUP

CAN'T HEAR THE SPEAKER

CONTROL = LOOK QUIZZICAL

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In this diagram, we are suggesting that the quizzical look would be fitting in situations where the group was small enough that a visual gesture or cue would be easily noticeable. It would also require that the interpreter be in the visual field of the speaker. Lastly, we suggest that the situation and conversational topic would have to be emotionally neutral. Looking at someone quizzically who was discussing something of an emotionally charged nature might cause the speaker to misinterpret your quizzical look as judgment instead of correctly recognizing it as an intended communication regarding the challenging paralinguistics of the situation.

Now, let's turn to the control choice of "ask the speaker to talk louder." What concurrent demands would need to be present to make that an effective choice? Consider this demand constellation:

In this constellation, we are again suggesting that it would be necessary that the conversation topic be emotionally neutral. Interrupting someone who is speaking with considerable emotion would rarely be wise if better choices were available. Additionally, we are suggesting that asking the speaker to talk louder would be more fitting if this was not the first time the interpreter had struggled with the challenging paralinguistics and had made it known to the group in other ways (e.g., by previously saying, "I'm having a hard time hearing..." or "Could you please repeat that?"). Finally, this control would be particularly fitting if you have recognized from the speaker's initial utterances that hearing would continue to be difficult.
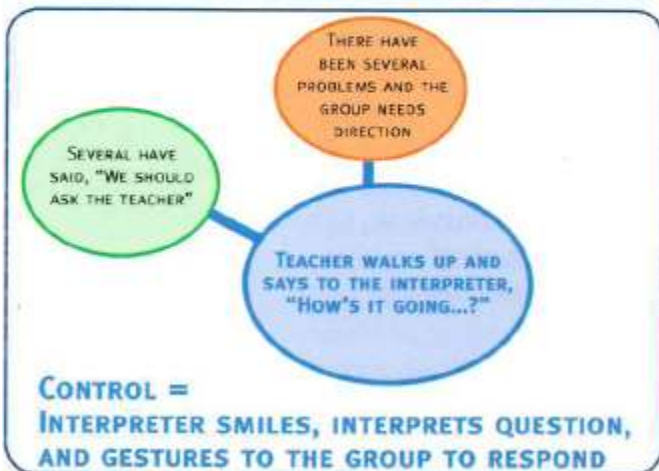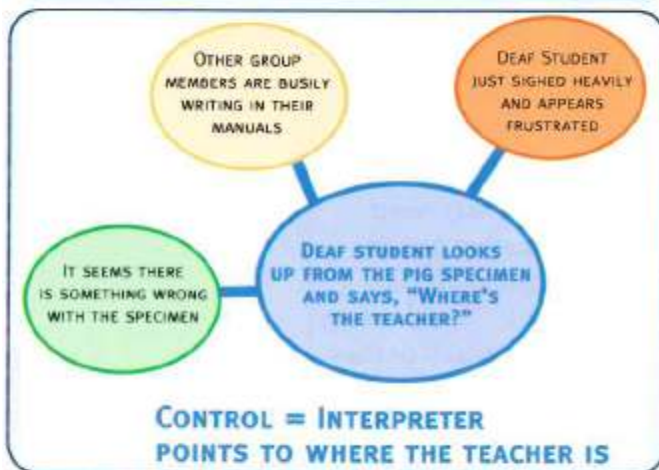
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Let's do one more. Given the control choice of "leave out (omit) the content you didn't hear," what concurrent demands would need to be present to make that an effective choice? People in our workshops often wonder how this could ever be the case but consider this demand constellation:
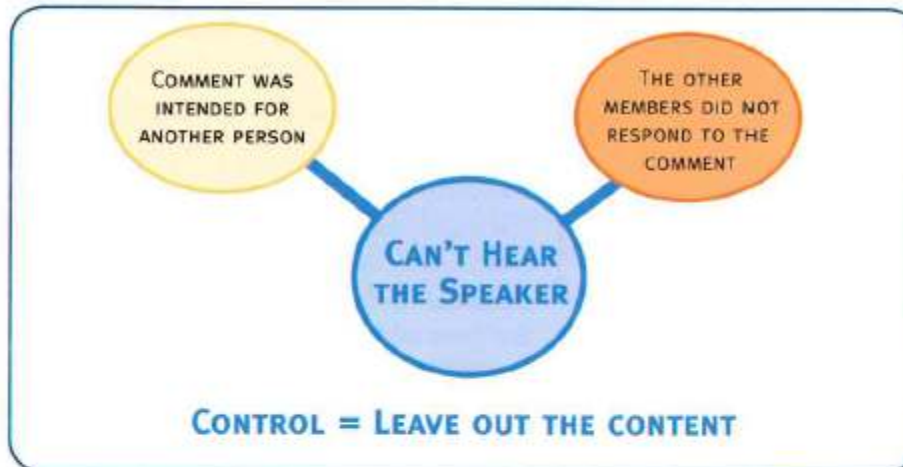
Here, we are suggesting that ignoring a comment *that was not fully heard* would be fitting if, in fact, the comment was intended for another person (imagine the person leaning in the direction of his neighbor and saying something softly that you couldn't hear) and if the other group members did not respond to the comment (likely because they, too, didn't hear it or they respected the intended private nature of the comment).

Let's now return to the science class fetal pig dissection scenario and briefly illustrate several more control choice decisions that are influenced by the concurrent demands associated with a given main demand. In each case illustrated on page 104, notice how the broader context of the situation (i.e., the entire constellation of demands) makes the given control choice logical, effective and, of course, ethical, especially from a teleological perspective where our goal is to optimize beneficial consequences of our decisions and minimize consequences that are not beneficial. Practice thinking of other control choices for each scenario, especially ones that might seem reasonable given the main demand, but turn out to be unwise given the concurrent demands listed.

The examples on page 104 are not offered to suggest that the controls we focus on are the only effective ones that could be employed in light of the demand constellations illustrated. Nor are we suggesting that an analysis of the

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CONTROL = INTERPRETER SAYS, "DO YOU WANT ME TO INTERRUPT AND TELL HIM?"

(Circle text: THIS MEMBER HAS MADE SEVERAL COMMENTS THROUGHOUT THAT OTHER MEMBERS IGNORE; COMMENT IS QUIETLY MADE IN THE DIRECTION OF ANOTHER MEMBER; DEAF STUDENT IS LOOKING DOWN AND WORKING ON THE SPECIMEN; GROUP MEMBER SAYS "I DON'T THINK THAT'S RIGHT" IN RELATION TO WHAT THE DEAF STUDENT IS DOING)

CONTROL = INTERPRETER POINTS TO WHERE THE TEACHER IS

(Circle text: OTHER GROUP MEMBERS ARE BUSILY WRITING IN THEIR MANUALS; DEAF STUDENT JUST SIGHED HEAVILY AND APPEARS FRUSTRATED; IT SEEMS THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE SPECIMEN; DEAF STUDENT LOOKS UP FROM THE PIG SPECIMEN AND SAYS, "WHERE'S THE TEACHER?")

CONTROL = INTERPRETER SMILES, INTERPRETS QUESTION, AND GESTURES TO THE GROUP TO RESPOND

(Circle text: THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL PROBLEMS AND THE GROUP NEEDS DIRECTION; SEVERAL HAVE SAID, "WE SHOULD ASK THE TEACHER"; TEACHER WALKS UP AND SAYS TO THE INTERPRETER, "HOW'S IT GOING...?")

constellation of demands in these scenarios would be limited to the few concurrent demands we present. We are merely illustrating how the construct of building a demand constellation can foster a productive dialogue on ethical and effective control choices in a given interpreting context.

Students in a classroom setting often have the time to build demand constellations in a forward direction, that is, starting from the main demand and then identifying concurrent demands before evaluating potential control choices and choosing the most ethical and effective one(s). In classroom settings, students usually have the luxury of time to think through such decisions. In contrast, practicum students and practitioners who are "on the job" are more likely making practice decisions (employing controls) without the luxury of time to think through their decisions that slowly and carefully. But that is true of all practice professions – acquiring and employing decision-making skills in a formal learning environment can occur in a slower and more deliberate fashion than is possible in the midst of actual professional practice.

However, this does not mean that ethical diligence and effective learning cannot occur after the fact; indeed this is how other practice professionals continue to hone and monitor their decision-making skills long after they have left the formal learning environment of the classroom. They usually do so through *reflective learning practices*, which we will cover more fully in Chapter 10. Reflective learning practices require that we build demand constellations backwards, starting from the control decision that

Dean, R. K., & Pollard, R. Q. (2013). *dc-s; the demand control schema: interpreting as a practice profession*. North Charleston: CreateSpace Independence Publ. Platform.

was made on the job and work retrospectively from there to consider the constellation of demands and, subsequently, the wisdom and effectiveness of the decision that was made in light of other possible control decisions that might have been made. Specifically, the actual control decision that was made at the time becomes the first topic described. It is always easy to identify because it is a behavior or translation choice the interpreter made and, moreover, the decision that the presenter wants to review. From there, the main demand is identified and then, through reflective analysis, the concurrent demands come to be identified. Once the entire constellation of demands has been fleshed out in this reflective manner, consideration of the control choice that was previously made versus alternative control options can proceed. Chapters 8 and 9 of this text provide further detail regarding how this evaluative consideration of various control options occurs, in light of a constellation of demands.

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