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## Transition Shock: Do Words Impact My Work?

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Transition Shock: Do Words Impact My Work?

Stephanie L. Bessinger

Western Oregon University

Spring 2021



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**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF  
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

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Action Research Project Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

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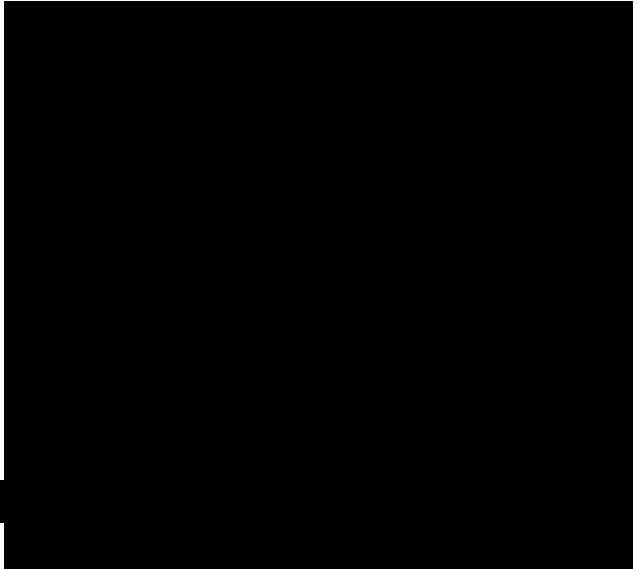
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dean of Graduate Studies and Research:**

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## TRANSITION SHOCK: DO WORDS IMPACT MY WORK?

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my journey, I have seen three different states, two graduations, and a total country quarantine lockdown. If you would have asked the younger me if I would ever expect to be where I am today, I am certain I would have said no. The growth, knowledge, and unexplainable stories I have obtained over the years are some for the ages.

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### ABSTRACT

In this action research, I looked at the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of the Demand Control Schema (DC-S) (Dean & Pollard, 2013) and how these aspects can play a role in my work as an interpreter, focusing on transition shock and colleague interactions. When interacting with coworkers, I have experienced comments that have scared me from taking the next steps in my career. These interactions can, at times, bring up unsettling feelings and in turn impact my work throughout the day. The goal of the research is to give a better understanding to myself about how we talk about our work with our colleagues and how it can have an impact on our work performance. I will also look at how major life events and comfort levels impact these interactions. Three experiences are at the forefront of focus in my mind when I think about transition shock; senior year undergraduate internship, my first job post-undergraduate degree, and moving to a new state in the middle of graduate school. Each posed their own challenges for me interpersonally and intrapersonally.

Throughout my research I kept a journal, logs, and other forms of notes, to keep a record of my experiences. My goal, although more of a marathon than a sprint, is to find a way to discover proper self-care/coping strategies due to the effects of transition shock, ultimately embracing the change and learning to find ways to continue growing in my endeavors. The prediction was that, at the end of all of this, a direct relationship will be found between how we talk about the work and the negative impact that talk has on my work performance. I also look at ways to analyze these interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects to improve my quality of life in the interpreting field.

*Keywords:* interpersonal, intrapersonal, transition shock

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**Background**

Growing up I have always been more of a follower than a leader, I found myself most comfortable in situations where I was around people who were willing to lead the way. These were also my expectations for my internship; I had high hopes and high expectations for someone to guide me every step of the way throughout my entire internship process. I made the decision to leave my family behind in Oregon and venture to the Big Apple, literally across the country from my comfort zone, for my internship. I pumped myself up, I got excited and was ready to learn. Although upon arrival the transition was not as smooth as what I had hoped. New city, new surroundings, new people, new culture; everything around me was new and nothing was the same as I was used to. My mind went into overdrive and often times I found myself flooded with feelings of fight or flight. The people in my corner were not guiding me as I had hoped and, instead, I was left to fend for myself to figure out my own way. The pre-determined expectations I had for myself caused this transition to be harder than I would have liked.

At the conclusion of internship, as a new interpreter, freshly graduated from my Interpreter Training Program (ITP), I felt I was ready to cautiously take on the world of interpreting. Upon graduation, I obtained an interpreting job, which was scary, but I felt I had the support I needed at work in order to do my job and grow in the field. I was ready for my first day at my new interpreting job. I walked in scared and anxious, but also excited and motivated. I still remember the sound of the key card scanner unlocking the door and the distinct smell of the air freshener right as you walk through the door. The memory I recall the most vividly was the feeling I got when I walked into the breakroom



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to see my colleagues conversing and laughing together. I never felt alone, other interpreters would approach me and ask about school and we would reminisce about our shared experiences attending the same school years apart or talk about common friends in the field. These were the moments that brought me sheer delight.

After graduating from my ITP and beginning Graduate school at the same university, I had become accustomed to talking about my work in a very specific way. When interpreting in teams or speaking with colleagues about the work I noticed a sense of understanding amongst us, which gave me a sense of comfort. It was not hard to find someone to sit down with and have a conversation about the work in alignment with the Demand Control Schema (DC-S) we have all learned so much about. I never realized how comfortable I had become in this familiar environment. I had engaged with former graduates of the same university and others who understood my philosophies when relating to the work of an interpreter. I felt at home and had no intention of leaving. This is because I am someone who places myself where I feel comfortable. I have a hard time stepping out of this place of comfort unless there are others there with me, guiding me. Then, about 6 months after starting my first job, I was faced with the difficult decision of stepping out of my comfort zone to take on a new adventure. This adventure included moving over 2,000 miles away from everything that I held dear. That essence of comfort I had become so used to and loved most would soon be challenged.

While embarking on this new journey across the country I had high hopes for my new life. I thought, “this is going to be awesome,” “I love my job, I’m so happy it transferred,” “I cannot wait to meet so many new interpreters!” Of course, I was nervous about having to start over with my career and in a new state. However, I had a lot of faith

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that I would do just fine. Never in a million years did I think I would struggle as much as I have. The first day at my newish job (same employer, new location) I was nervous, surrounded by new people in a new location. I was not sure what to expect. I was excited when I heard the key card sound of the door unlocking but was instantly brought back to reality as I walked into an unfamiliar smell and surrounding. The location was much smaller than what I was used to and had less people working, on average, than my previous place of employment. I was like a lost puppy in a maze of computers and interpreters. Once I found a place to sit, the actual work was the same as my previous place of employment. It was not until the director came over to watch me work that I felt a sense of panic. This person knew nothing about me or my work. In that moment, my mind was moving a mile a minute. Trying to remember everything I learned in training, trying to be as perfect as possible. In these moments, my mind goes blank, my palms start to sweat, and I could not help but want to impress my director. My mind would flood with many positive and negative emotions, which would cloud my decision making process.

### **Statement of the problem**

Through my action research I sought to answer two research questions. First, can transition shock impact how we talk about our work with other interpreters? Secondly, am I implementing proper strategies to combat the transition shock I am experiencing?

As an interpreter we are exposed to many different personalities, opinions, thoughts, facts, what's right and what's wrong. How do we process all of the things being thrown our way? When interpreters are first stepping out into the world of professional interpreting, the transition can be a lot for anyone to handle. In this action research, I will

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explore transition shock and the effects of interacting with my colleagues. While exploring my research questions I will be referring to the Demand Control Schema (DC-S), focusing on interpersonal demands and intrapersonal demands.

### **Purpose of study**

Entering the world of interpreting for the first time, did you feel ready to embark on this journey alone? I was cautiously ready. I felt my Interpreter Training Program (ITP) did a great job preparing me for the world of interpreting. Whereas my internship prepared me to learn about the importance of isolation and how to be alone. Upon graduation I felt I had the resources, connections, and support needed to succeed. If ever there were any questions, I knew I had loads of people I could rely on to help me out. Many of these individuals had graduated from the same program I had and/or talked about the work in a similar way. That being said, there were some changes I did not expect. This research is designed to look at how I experienced transition shock, focusing on interpersonal and intrapersonal demands and what type of controls I implemented in order to adapt to what life was throwing my way.

After moving across the country to an area where not many people had heard of Western Oregon University, I noticed a huge shift in my self-confidence involving the work of an interpreter. Because interpreting is a practice profession that is ever growing and developing, interpreters working in different states may not have the same philosophies regarding talking about our interpreting work.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Looking at a theoretical framework, the most applicable framework for this research found was transition shock theory. When talking about transition shock there are

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many moving parts that can impact the ‘shock factor.’ The information on this framework was pulled from research performed by a woman named Judy E. Duchscher (2009). The research focuses on transition shock in the nursing field and like the field of interpreting, nursing is also considered a practice profession. A practice profession involves social decisions, thoughts and judgements when providing quality work between the consumer and the individual providing services (Dean & Pollard, 2013, p. xiv).

In reference to the figures in Duchscher (2009) article, there is a pattern of loss, doubt, confusion, and disorientation, which lead to the experiencing of transition shock. For example, loss focuses on relationships, which could be moving to a new state away from your familiar friends, and/or no longer in control of your emotions. Second, leading to doubt which focuses on knowledge, could look like, not feeling confident in your skills, or lacking in knowledge on the subject. Third, confusion focuses on responsibilities, similar to doubt where lacking in knowledge or skills can play a factor to confusion. Lastly, Disorientation focuses on roles and examples can be changing routines and limited feedback (pp. 1106-1107).

When researching transition shock theory there was a disconnect among nurses and their expectations. The nurses attempted to decipher between actually being professionals and their expectations as to what they felt like they were supposed to be in their professional field. The article relating to the novice to expert experience discusses new graduate registered nurses (NGRN). “The Stages of Transition Theory, illustrated in the figure, describes transition as progressing through three main stages; doing, being and knowing. These three phases are overarched by what Duchscher describes as transition shock, occurring in the first three to four months of transition” (Murray, Sundin, and

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Cope, 2019, p. 10). The stages doing, being and knowing are the steps of orientation as seen when entering a new field. “Duchscher learned that early in the doing phase, NGRNs had idealistic expectations and anticipations that were far from reality.” (Murray, Sundin, and Cope, 2019, p. 11).

Relating to my research, the idea of ‘expectation’ can come as a dangerous surprise. “Duchscher’s second progression, being, recognised the transition of the NGRN from new beginner to someone who can now look beyond their own abilities, or inabilities, to see the patient.” (Murray, Sundin, and Cope, 2019, p. 12). This stage is the in between stage, you are no longer a student but not yet considered a seasoned professional. “The final stage of knowing sees shifts in personal and professional socialisation and changes to their stress influences, as frustrations move from the NGRNs own insecurities and abilities, to frustrations with the system.” (Murray, Sundin, and Cope, 2019, p. 13).

It is important, when talking about transition shock, that we understand just how it is impacting our work as interpreters. Through my research I take a look at the impacts transition shock has had on my interpreting journey. Beginning with undergraduate internship and moving up until now as a working professional in the field of signed language interpreting. When considering transition shock theory, Duchscher (2009) states, “foster healthy partnerships both between seasoned and novice nursing practitioners” (p. 1111). By doing so, it is mentioned that there is a need for focusing on continued mentoring once entering the professional world.

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### **Limitations of the Study**

When looking into the limitations of this research the most prevalent is the number of participants in this research. This research, as discussed in a later section, is pulling from other practice professions such as the nursing field. As well as, other published research by researchers in the field of interpreting. Keeping in mind that research directed at the interpreting field is new and growing.

Another limitation to the study, when working on a sample size of one, is that the research itself will be subjective. The data that was collected was pulled from journal entries that were used to put my thoughts, feelings, and experiences on paper. Ultimately, they were not intended for research purposes, but were later dissected for this action research. Due to the time frame between written journal entries and analysis for research, it is possible that some of the entries may have gotten lost in translation. However, for this research, I felt all feelings were valid and had an important place in this research.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this paper, this is how I will be representing these terms, while I will be providing citations for some, others will be defined in my own words as applicable to the research.

*Control* – “possible options of actions that an interpreter could implement in response to a demand” (Kenoyer, 2020, p. 15).

*Deduced Feeling(s)* - Feelings I assumed were happening based on how I read the sentences from journal entries.

*Demand* – “salient aspects of our work that can and do impact decision-making” (Kenoyer, 2020, p. 14).

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*Demand Control Schema* – A reflective practice applied to signed language interpreting.

*Interpersonal* - The interaction between individuals.

*Intrapersonal* - What is happening internally, including my own thoughts and feelings.

*Literal Feeling(s)* - Feeling words written explicitly in my journal entries.

*New Interpreter* - An interpreter just starting out in the field with minimal to no professional working experience.

*Seasoned/Experienced Interpreter* - An interpreter who is more knowledgeable than their new interpreter counterparts. Often having several years of experience under their belt and vast knowledge of the position they are working in.

*Supervision* - “An intentional interaction between two or more practitioners, the goal of which is to engage in reflective practice, ensure quality services for consumers, and support the wellbeing of the practitioner” (Curtis, 2017, p. 5).

*Transition Shock* - Significant changes in someone’s life. Including, but not limited to, new environments (i.e. moving to a new state), job settings, professional status (i.e. student to working professional)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

**Transition Shock**

According to Wakefield (2018), “transition shock is defined as transitioning from your comfort zone as a student to the professional world” (p. 47). Meadows (2013) stated, “transition shock is a bona fide challenge for new practitioners” (p. 13). Meadows (2013) also went on to compare new interpreters to new nurses and new teachers. She mentioned, “new interpreters go through much of the same sort of transitional experiences as new nurses or new teachers” (p. 49). The comparison between new nurses and new interpreters transitioning from schooling to the “real-world” were similar in the way that the student’s expectations of transitioning to the working field differed from the reality of their transition. When taking a look at a new interpreter’s transition into the field of interpreting, right out of school, it appeared that the logistical aspects of interpreting were missing. “It is entirely probable that when the respondents went through training, the primary focus of the curriculum was on developing the interpreting skills needed to transfer the message between clients while very little attention was given to the business side” (Meadows, 2013, p. 50). This gives evidence to the reason why interpreters’ expectations were not directly correlated to their reality.

When interpreters’ expectations are not met in their mind, this can pose other challenges. “Not only were new interpreters generally more uncomfortable around other interpreters, but they often had a hard time acclimating to working with others. This was true both for working with other interpreters as well as just being around other interpreters in general” (Meadows, 2013, p. 51). I believe these uncomfortable interpersonal demands can ultimately cause intrapersonal demands for newer interpreters.



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Which then in turn may lead to a more difficult time transitioning from student to a working professional interpreter. Meadows (2013) also discussed a change in behavior by newer interpreters, saying, “[...] there was a constant need by new members of all three professions to appear like they knew what they were doing as a way to hide their own insecurities and struggles from colleagues and clients” (pp. 51-52).

### **Demand Control Schema**

A vast majority of the research discussed in this portion of the action research will focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal demands, as described by the Demand Control Schema (DC-S) (Dean & Pollard, 2013). Dean and Pollard (2013) describe interpersonal demands as, the interactions happening between the consumers, as well as the interaction happening between the interpreter(s) and the consumer(s). They define intrapersonal demands as, “specific to the cognitive, physiological, and psychological experiences of the interpreter” (2013, p.9). In summary interpersonal is based on interactions with others and intrapersonal is the interactions happening within yourself. The goal of the DC-S is, “to provide the interpreting profession with constructs that allow for effective dialogue about interpreting work” (Dean & Pollard, 2013, p. 138). Interpreting is considered a practice profession, similar to nursing. “Interpreting, like all practice professions, requires skills and knowledge beyond the technical skills that also are required for work effectiveness” (Dean & Pollard, 2013, p. 67).

Curtis (2017) thesis on benefits of supervision, “The demand control schema (DC-S) provides a way of analyzing and assessing the work of interpreting that is in line with the designation of interpreting as a practice profession and a teleological approach to ethics.” (p. 2). Dean and Pollard (2013) define *teleology* as, “the weighing of decision

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consequences against values” (p. 85). The field of signed language interpreting does not have much research confirming if there are benefits resulting from the participation of supervision. That being said, if interpreters begin reporting benefits occurring from supervision, this could help create a more normative view of supervision and establishing best practices that could ultimately help with horizontal violence, vicarious trauma, and burnout (Curtis, 2017, pp. 27-28). Although there is not much research about the benefits of supervision for the signed language interpreting field, medical and mental health fields have seen benefits from implementing supervision. Some of these benefits include, better understanding of issues in the workplace, increased self-awareness, improvement in relationships with colleagues, job satisfaction, less stress, better quality for clients (as cited in Curtis, 2017, p. 3).

### **Folklore**

The field of interpreting has changed significantly over the years. Flora’s (2013) thesis on folklore mentions, “The philosophical view of the role of ASL/English interpreters has changed over time. This change in philosophical views parallels changes in the field of ASL/English interpreting. The field has become professional only in its recent history” (p. 30). A profession that is continuing to grow through research conducted among interpreters seems to confirm the disconnect within the field.

A participant from Flora’s (2013) research stated: “So, with newer interpreters who just come out of school and just so happen to take the test and pass, they’re not seen as equal colleagues, or equal to the people who have been in the field” (p. 56). These are comments that have appeared in a couple of the research thesis’ I have looked at, which also includes the topic of power dynamics. Flora (2013) noted that seasoned interpreters

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believed they ultimately were at the top of a hierarchical system, giving the seasoned interpreters the power to make decisions based on what is appropriate and not appropriate for new interpreters. (pp. 74-75). Accompanied with the idea of power dynamics were terms like “hazing” which according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, hazing is defined as, “an initiation process involving harassment” (Hazing, 2020). This mind-set experienced interpreters have seemed to lead to ultimately giving the new interpreters the right to “earn their keep” in the interpreting field. This is where I decided to look into some research in regard to horizontal violence (Ott, 2012).

### **Horizontal Violence**

When talking about horizontal violence, I referred to a passage that was discussed in Ott’s (2012) Thesis *about horizontal violence*, where she took the time to cite other authors definitions of the term:

One of the most frequently used terms, and the one that will be used for this paper, was coined by Paulo Freire, (1992) “horizontal violence.” Freire, in his work with oppressed populations, defined horizontal violence in a group as “striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest reasons” (p. 48). The key here is that a situation of powerlessness is created in the subordinated group, and the response to that situation is horizontal violence among group members. Funk (2002), drawing upon Freire’s work, defined horizontal violence as “the curious behavior of members of oppressed groups who often lash out at their peers in response to oppression instead of attacking their oppressors” (p.4). Many scholars whose work has emerged from Freire’s use different terms for this phenomenon, including Dellasega (2011) who drew on Freire’s (1992) research, but used the

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term “relational aggression” (p. 4), Lewis (2004) who favored the term “workplace 14 bullying” (p. 283), and Patterson (2005) who used the term “hazing” (p. 21). Bartholomew (2006) labeled this behavior “horizontal hostility,” “horizontal violence,” “verbal abuse,” and “bullying” (p. 3). (pp. 13-14)

For those who have experienced instances of horizontal violence, this can lead to scars and tension between new interpreters and experienced interpreters (Ott, 2012, p. 58). These scars can leave lasting bad memories on someone’s mind. “Literature supported the finding that professionals are hesitant to be observed and to work together with one another based on the belief that others will only seek to criticize them (Musanti & Pence, 2010, as cited in Ott, 2012)

Although the idea of hazing, horizontal violence, or criticism have come up repeatedly throughout Ott’s Thesis, Ott goes on to say, “It is important to note that, if indeed this is evidence of horizontal violence, it would not be appropriate to accuse participants in this study or interpreters, in general, of purposefully being violent toward others” (p. 74). I made the conclusion that rather than being a purposeful behavior it was instead an unconscious behavior, which is defined as, “one’s unintentional actions [...] subliminal [...]” (Bargh & Morsella, 2008).

(p. 74). Prior, Ott (2012) mentioned, “The average survey response numbers indicated that each group felt more comfortable with their own group, and that this effect was greater for newer interpreters, which provided the preliminary evidence of intergenerational tension [...]” (pp. 56-57). Given the data supported in Flora’s Thesis on Folklore (2012), he also noted the tension between seasoned and new interpreters. This

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being a reason why newer interpreters tend to stick together with newer interpreters and vice versa seasoned interpreters tend to stick together with seasoned interpreters.

### **Entering the Field**

As stated by Hamilton and McAlpine (2019), “The ITP that Halle and Alissa both went through puts a strong emphasis on the development of vulnerability and the importance of showing up for hard conversations, and that education is what has allowed this project to continue” (p. 86). I graduated from the same ITP the year after. How we learned to talk about the work was something I became accustomed to. Therefore, as mentioned in the paragraphs above, when discussing horizontal violence and folklore, it is common to stick together with those similar to you. In these examples newer interpreters stick with newer interpreters and experienced interpreters stick with experienced interpreters. Having similar educational backgrounds and experience could ultimately ease tension between colleagues, when discussing interpreting work.

Previously mentioned, Flora (2013) talked about an element on arrogance that seasoned interpreters saw in new interpreters (pp. 58-63). The arrogance that Flora wrote about from the perspective of his participants may have been in part to the new interpreter’s attempting to seem confident in their work. Like mentioned above, by behavior they witnessed by other interpreters in the field. Hamilton and McAlpine (2019) talk about, “The development of confidence is an indicator of professional development but looking back we learned that our confidence level was not a direct indicator of our competence” (p. 112). So, was this arrogance due to mimic observed behavior? Or Trying to prove yourself to belong in this field? With that being said, I found this quote to be very true to myself, “There was an interesting dichotomy here that growing as a

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professional required both isolation and community. Both were enlightening and allowed for different kinds of growth, and I'm sure that I will continue to cycle between the two as I move forward" (Hamilton & McAlpine, 2019, p. 116). There needs to be a way we can come to an agreeance between experienced and new interpreters and how we talk about the work. All while understanding that each person is different from the next. This can help the transition shock theory when moving from student to new interpreter to seasoned interpreter and so on.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

I had been keeping journals since my undergraduate internship. I tried to create a journal entry each day, however the journaling had become less frequent. I looked back on journal entries from my undergraduate internship up until now. From those journal entries I coded patterns I noticed from each entry. Because more recent journaling had not been as consistent, I looked back on messages and notes I had jotted down regarding how my day went. I then used these entries to take a qualitative approach towards my action research.

**Participant**

For the purpose of this research the only participant in this study is me. I was a student from Western Oregon University (WOU), in both the undergraduate American Sign Language/English Interpreting program (ASLEI) and a graduate student in the, Interpreting Studies: Theory and Practice program. Upon graduation of my bachelor's degree, I began working in the professional world as a Video Relay Service (VRS) interpreter. The data I collected is from internship, during my undergraduate program, and working in the professional field as an interpreter. All the data collected focuses solely on my feelings and perspective.

**Data Collection/Analysis**

The collection of data for this action research began in April 2018 during my undergraduate internship and continued through May 2020. The collection of data focuses on my experiences as a new interpreter still in school, through my experiences working as a new interpreting professional. The data that has been collected is from a qualitative approach. The data focused on my internship experience in the k-12 setting

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and then from my professional experience in Video Relay Service (VRS). Much of the data collection took part from undergraduate internship (April-June 2018) through major events during my professional journey. These major events included, starting a new job after undergraduate graduation (July 2018), moving to a new state, and transferring my job (March 2019), and finally enduring a global pandemic (March 2020). For each journal entry, I was able to pick out two categories, deduced feelings, and literal feelings.

### **Internship**

First, during undergraduate internship, I wrote daily journal entries. To analyze the data, I began by separating the feelings on the entry into either, deduced feelings or literal feelings. I also made note of any interactions that had occurred between me and anyone with whom I interacted. Once each day had been categorized, I created a spreadsheet that laid out the two categories of feelings, then counted each time specific words appeared in the spreadsheet. Once all the common words had been counted, I then separated them into two more categories, positive words, and negative words. I looked at the positive and negative words and then looked to see if they preceded or followed any of the interpersonal interactions.

### **First Job/New State/Global Pandemic**

Second, data was collected while working my first job in VRS, moving to a new state, and working during a global pandemic. Like during internship, I collected words and separated them into deduced feelings and literal feelings. After which I separated those two categories into two more categories of positive and negative words. During my experience with my first job, most of the journaling and notations were made around interpersonal interactions. Once I was able to look at the words categorized in positive



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and negative word categories I could then determine whether positive or negative words preceded or followed any interpersonal interactions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Findings**

Transitioning from undergraduate interpreting to “real-world” professional interpreting and learning how to communicate about the work with individuals, who I perceived to talk about the work in a different way than I was used to, is something I am still learning to understand. Are words so powerful that they can ultimately hinder or help my interpreting work? After coding all the data my goal was to figure out if positive or negative words are ultimately dictating how my interactions with other interpreters will go. The data that was collected ended up showing that, although negative words were impacting me personally, the negative words were not produced interpersonally. Overall, the negative words were ultimately intrapersonal, or my own intrapersonal demands were the most harmful to my work as an interpreter, with influencing factors from transition shock and interpersonal demands.

Overall, the number of times negative words were counted was higher than the number of positive words. This went for both the literal and the deduced categories, with the number of words counting higher in the deduced category than in the literal category. The data has been collected from 2018 to the present. According to the data, the presence of negative words being more than positive words has not changed since internship 2018, until present. Meaning, that the data remained constant throughout. There were always more negative words present than positive words for each category. However, there was a slight decline in negative words when I first entered the field of interpreting and an incline in positive words. The most noticeable difference was that the type of negative words being used were related to nerves and self-doubt. When comparing the internship

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to working in a new state/during a global pandemic, the type of negative words being used related to fear, confusion, and sadness.

The data collected was a compilation of feeling words that I collected from journal entries over the years. These journal entries focused on three major life transitions, undergraduate internship, post-undergraduate professional work, and moving to a new state to continue as a working professional. Between these three major life events there was an overall common theme, a lack of confidence in my own skills/self and lack of trust in others who did not share the same views. The theme relating to intrapersonal demands can be seen by a category I labeled, “deduced emotions.” These emotions were not directly stated in my journal entries, but instead they were deduced by how I read the passage from the entries. Another part of the research was to look at a supervision session I had with others in my program; each time we concluded the sessions, the end result for me was related to an intrapersonal demand.

### **Discussion**

When addressing the research question, do words impact my work as an interpreter, the research did not reflect what I had originally anticipated. Overall, I had expected the dialogue between myself and the other interpreters to impact my work. Throughout the research, it became clearer, as stated above, that it was not the direct interpersonal demands that impacted my work as an interpreter. Instead, it was the intrapersonal demands that impacted my work the most. Although these interactions played a role in the impact on my work, the conversations with others ultimately caused an inner dialogue that, in the end, revealed that my own insecurities had the biggest impact on my work.

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In the beginning, after graduating undergraduate school, I was working with a majority of individuals who went through similar programs (if not the same program) as myself. This made transitioning from my safe place, surrounded by teachers and my cohort, to the professional working field, much easier.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Transitioning out of what is familiar is always scary for me. In this action research project, I wanted to see if the novel transitions I experienced caused any reason for my work as an interpreter to be impacted in negative and/or positive ways. In the end, I believe that outside factors like the shock of being in an environment around people I did not go to school with and did not know had a distinct impact on my work as an interpreter. Once I discovered these factors, my goals were to focus on how to talk about the work and to find strategies to improve my interpreting work. I also hoped to learn new strategies to implement when working with other interpreters with whom I am unfamiliar to continue to advance in my career. Throughout this process, I kept circling back to supervision and the importance of it when talking about the work.

The use of supervision can be a helpful segue from talking about the work with people you feel comfortable with to people you may not fully trust. During my internship we were placed into assigned supervision groups. We presented situations to our groups that we wanted to take a closer look at, in hopes of obtaining a better understanding of the presented situation. Once the supervision session had concluded in our groups, a sense of relief often followed this conclusion. When ending a supervision session, I would feel less overwhelmed and realize that my presented situation was not as bad as I would think it was in the beginning.

Throughout my research I discovered a gap between pre-undergraduate interpreting and post-undergraduate interpreting. As stated in Dean and Pollard (2000) “there is a need for an extended period of supervised practice for a signed language interpreter, of a length and nature similar to the internships common in other professional

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occupations” (as cited in Meadows, 2013, p.13). Continuing supervised practice within the field, speaking for myself, is important when I am faced with a situation that I feel is “the end of the world”. When in reality being able to work through the situation in a supervision session can help to understand the situation at hand, potentially from another perspective.

### **Future Research**

Although this research was limited to my own personal findings in relation to my personal experience from student to working professional, I would like to see more research conducted to help ease the transition for students entering the interpreting profession or for new interpreters becoming seasoned interpreters. By creating a larger sample size and distributing surveys to both new and seasoned interpreters, we could see other interpreters’ experiences and potentially discover patterns that could help the field progress forward in a more unified fashion. This survey could give a better understanding to the participants background in regards to the interpreting field. For example, the study could show the interpreters educational background and years of experience. Once there is a better understanding of the participants, we could then compare the interpreters and their experiences to see if they are similar or different and attempt to figure out where the disconnect is happening. Ultimately, helping to lessen the impact of transition shock when advancing in interpreting field.

I wanted to recommendation for another avenue for future research. “Another suggestion is to provide ASL/English interpreting students with extended internships, possibly lasting a year past graduation from an interpreter training program, similar to the medical and counseling professions” (Chin, 2019, p. 35). I agree this would be beneficial,

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speaking for myself. Knowing that after graduating from undergraduate school you would be given additional support in the form of an internship I believe would help to lessen transition shock. Having someone like a mentor in place to continue to prepare you for the future could also help to create a sense of comradery amongst colleagues.

### **Recommendations**

As we enter the field there are questions we can ask to create a smoother transition for ourselves as interpreters. We can ask ourselves; how can we talk about our work with others who come from different educational backgrounds? Is there a way we can work through our frustrations with others, to find a breakthrough in our process? How to become ok with who you are to talk about the work in a more open way with others who may also be experiencing transition shock? Would you benefit from a mentor in the field who can help minimize the experiencing of transition shock?

These are some important questions we can ask ourselves. These also may be questions we are already thinking about, but how can we present them to other interpreters in the field? This way we can begin bridging the gap between new interpreters and seasoned interpreters in the interpreting field. Also, while understanding the intrapersonal demands we may be facing on a day-to-day basis, in the end, it is possible these intrapersonal demands are getting in the way of us taking the steps we need to move forward in the field.

### **Closing**

In closing, the purpose for this research is not only to help other new interpreters understand that they are not alone in their feelings, but also to give some insight to seasoned interpreters that there are a lot of intrapersonal demands new interpreters may

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be dealing with when they start out. My hope is that this research will be used as a baseline for others to continue this line of research to move the field forward into the future. The importance of supervision and understanding how we talk about the work is just a starting point.

A next step would be creating a more unified front in the interpreting world. Understanding how we can talk about the work and work together as colleagues, mentors, mentees, teachers, etc. As a human who processes my shock differently than others and talks about the work differently than others, I hope that together we can find a way to lessen the shock of transition for other new interpreters when going from their undergraduate education into the professional working world. If the only thing that you gain from reading this research is a new perspective in how we can work together, I would be happy.



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