

**Tell Me How You Really Feel: A Qualitative Look at the Trepidation Felt by
American Sign Language Interpreters When Voicing Taboo and Strong Language**

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ABSTRACT

Interpreters are humans and, despite historical assumptions and beliefs, do not remain completely neutral when performing interpreting duties. At times, interpreters will feel emotions that surface as a reaction to source messages. These emotions can arise quickly with little warning, causing interpreters to navigate them in a matter of seconds and make decisions regarding how to best interpret the source message. This is especially true if the source message contains any form of taboo / strong language. Such messages may cause trepidation when voicing - working from American Sign Language into English - and word choices may affect the hearing client's perception of the deaf consumer. Interviewing twenty-four currently-practicing hearing ASL interpreters produced qualitative data regarding the emotions felt while voicing neutral content versus voicing taboo content. The results are useful for current practitioners in recognizing patterns of work and striving to correct them as well as developing skills and habits conducive to the interpreting profession.

KEY WORDS

American Sign Language, emotions, feelings, interpreting, profanity, racial slur, swearing, taboo, vicarious trauma, voicing

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Introduction

American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are tasked with “[rendering] the message faithfully” (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [RID], 2005, p. 3), regardless of the message content or the type of language that is used, either by the client or the consumer. As an interpreter, one is often considered a cultural mediator, so it is important to recognize factors of influence while oscillating between Deaf and hearing cultures, such as whether or not they experience uneasiness when interpreting taboo / strong language. If uneasiness exists, then the interpreter must understand how those emotions may prohibit the full conveyance of the message, thus changing the interpreting interaction, overall. Said emotions could affect the decisions that the interpreter makes in the midst of the interaction; thus recognizing the emotions behind a decision could ultimately strengthen the overall service that an interpreter provides the Deaf consumer.

Mouallem (2015) posits in her abstract that omitting taboo can lead to severe and possibly fatal consequences; taboo can no longer be ignored. Additionally, without exhibiting a conscious effort to appropriately navigate taboo language (or the source message in general), interpreters can possibly affect the perceptions that hearing people have of the Deaf interlocutors (Feyne, 2015).

Profanity research is still in its infancy (Wood, 2019). So far, limited research has been conducted discussing gender influences and cultural influences on an interpreter’s mediation of a taboo message from English (ENG) into ASL, but no research to date has been uncovered discussing such influences in interpreting taboo language from

ASL to ENG. This exploratory study seeks to analyze the concepts of interpreting taboo language from ASL into ENG and the cultural implications of voicing such messages, and to create a link between many of the discussions of interpreting taboo / strong language.

In this research study, twenty-four hearing interpreting participants watched one stimulus video to establish a baseline in their emotions towards a neutral source message containing no taboo language. The participants, then, watched two additional videos, each containing a type of taboo language, including profanity and racial slurs, and recorded their associated emotions. One taboo video presented a white signer while the other, a Black signer. An in-depth interview uncovered some of the reasons why the participants experienced specific emotions, including upbringing, current religion of practice, cultural identity, etc. Findings of this study show that trepidation is likely more related to an interpreter's perceived skill level or the formality of the source message rather than the taboo content; voicing racial slurs created the strongest negative feeling, and affected the target message the most.

An interpreter need not be afraid of voicing taboo / strong language. Practitioners should seek professional development with a focus on this type of language so as to prepare as much as possible. Murphy's (2012) abstract offers that:

Interpreters do not have the luxury of ignoring this class of words. It is to an interpreter's benefit to understand this aspect of language and class of words on a more conscious level, to be able to analyze his/her own filters and biases, have access to strategies for managing utterances that contain profanity, and be aware that cultural differences do exist.

In this manner, a hearing ASL interpreter will be best able to provide communication equity for consumers and clients alike.

Preliminary Definitions

- American Sign Language (ASL): any use of sign language within the US. Every spoken language has its corresponding sign language. Similarly, just as dialects exist in spoken languages, dialects and various styles exist within sign languages. Therefore, the umbrella terms will be used in an all-encompassing manner.
- Client: the hearing hiring entity that is responsible for paying for interpreting services.
- Consumer: the Deaf individual receiving an interpreted message in their natural sign language.
- Heritage language learner: an individual who possesses a proficient connection to the target language and culture.
- Interpreter Training Program (ITP): the official, post-secondary education an individual may receive to gain knowledge and skills to work within the profession.
- Non-heritage language learner: an individual who does not possess proficiency in the target language and is studying the target language and culture different than that of their own.
- Taboo / Strong language: any of the following (not an exhaustive list): profanity, sex, body parts, scatology (body excrement), drugs, death and disease, blasphemy, and racial slurs.
- Voicing: ASL interpreters work predominantly from English (ENG) into ASL and from ASL into ENG. “Voicing” refers to the interpreter’s work produced from the ASL source message into the ENG target message.

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Interpreters possess a unique quality that makes them useful to two or more language communities, as they are tasked with facilitating communication between individuals who do not speak the same language. This role incorporates the interpersonal domain of power - regarding how people connect with and relate to one another, and who experience certain advantages while others are disadvantaged (Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2016). Interpreters will use this power to manage the interaction effectively, and directly affect its outcome. As part of the process, this power dynamic also governs the split-second decisions an interpreter will make regarding their word choices when interpreting from ASL into English. Oftentimes decisions are made based on social experiences, likely to maintain positive connections with others. With many ideologies forming the “normal” order of society, people are generally implicitly guided by culturally-embedded norms; sometimes, people are unaware of the why behind the things they do. The same can be said of ASL interpreters, and if one is not careful, the implicit guidance can damage an interpreting interaction.

This literature review will briefly outline the various forms of social norms that govern American society, with a focus on taboo language and how it can ultimately affect an interpreter’s word choice when representing the Deaf consumer of a triadic interaction, and suggestions for navigation. Throughout the discussion, the types and origins of, attitudes regarding, and the scientific effects of taboo language will be presented along with a brief introduction to “(im)politeness” theories. Finally, the concept

will be explored within ASL and Deaf culture, and how it relates to interpreters. This study seeks to add to the research regarding best practices in ASL interpreting.

Social Folkways, Mores, Taboo, and Laws

Definitions and Differentiations

Sociology has identified four standard norms of behavior that people tend to follow within their cultures: folkways, mores, taboos, and laws (Crossman, 2019; Drew, 2021b). Varying in intensity from left to right, implicitly and explicitly, each norm governs how individuals interact with one another as well as responses to various behaviors. These norms are learned from a variety of people within a culture, are ingrained from childhood (Drew, 2021b, folkways definition section), and are upheld by individuals or society as a whole, much like social conditioning theory, which states people are more or less trained - through the use of positive and negative reinforcement - to respond in specific, societally-approved ways (Canterella, 2019, "Social Conditioning Definition" section).

Folkways are the least stringent of the four social norms that organize casual interactions. They help to differentiate between rude and polite behavior and exert social pressure on people to behave in certain ways (Crossman, 2019, folkways section, para. 5). Simple examples include standing in line to wait a turn, covering the mouth when yawning, not talking with a mouthful of food, or saying please and thank you. Breaking a folkway carries only small moral significance or consequence.

While folkways differentiate polite from rude behavior, mores expand upon the idea by determining ethical behavior. The term "more" derives from the word "moral" (Harper, n.d.), which carries with it the responsibility of right versus wrong. Mores are

trickier to identify because they could be disguised as folkways, taboos, or laws; the differentiation is the layer of morality. People tend to harbor stronger feelings regarding the violation of a more and may cause one to be shunned or excommunicated from the community. Talking behind a friend's back, cohabitation with a romantic partner, and some forms of discrimination and oppression fall within the "more" category.

Taboos, in both behavior and language, are "a prohibition of certain behavior that is so strict that violating it results in extreme disgust" (Crossman, 2019, taboo section, para. 1). The word "taboo" is thought to have Polynesian origins, most likely from the Tongan language (Devlin, 2020; Mengxun, 2020). Oftentimes there is no discussion regarding a taboo act because it is embarrassing, socially unacceptable and is often not spoken of in front of children (Drew, 2021b, taboo discussion section). Simple examples include incest, spitting at another, and cannibalism. More discussion of taboo language will be presented in later sections of this literature review.

Finally, laws are the strictest form of social norm, and are officially created and maintained at the state and/or federal levels, enforceable by those who have been entrusted with the power to do so (e.g., police, other government agents) (Crossman, 2019, laws section, para. 1). Society establishes laws for the protection against the destruction of property or violence. Sanctions can range from a payable fine to incarceration. Some examples include traffic laws, sex crimes, and murder. Interestingly, some people have no issue with breaking laws while at the same time, adhering to folkways. There have been reports of "polite criminals" who will respectfully approach people on the street with weapons (Rivera, 2021) and even assault individuals in their homes, saying "thank you" afterward (Dunn, 2018).

Social Norms and Context

Spencer-Oatey (2007) presents an argument similar to the concepts of folkways, mores, taboos, and laws, saying that people are not only governed by their personal thoughts and beliefs but also those of the general society. The author refers to this phenomenon as “sociality rights-obligations”, that people expect certain behaviors from others, and when these norms are violated, as in the case of taboo language, people feel injustice, immorality, and a lack of fair consideration (Culpeper, 2019). Similarly, Tungjitcharoen and Berntsen (2020) research the “cultural life scripts” that guide the way we remember the significant moments of our lives, also influenced by collective culturally shared structure.

Finally, is the theory of (im)politeness, which has been historically studied by a wealth of researchers. The major players include Goffman (1955) who spoke regarding (im)politeness as it dealt with face and Lakoff (1973) who created a list of rules to follow to be considered “polite”. Leech (1983) created the maxims of positive politeness and negative politeness, while Brown & Levinson (1987) expanded the notion of face (naming both positive and negative face and face-threatening-acts). Conversely, Culpeper (1996) developed the concept of impoliteness, and Spencer-Oatey (2002) discussed rapport and face. Politeness theory, specifically, deals with the successful creation, maintenance, and necessary repair of positive social relationships using linguistic interaction (Bousfield, 2015), while impoliteness theory tackles the opposite; specifically, “communicative language or behaviors that are negatively evaluated in a particular context because they violate expectations, desired, or obligations ... and result in offense (negative emotional reactions)” (Culpeper, 2015, para. 2).

It is important to understand that no matter the name assigned to the phenomenon, what one culture considers a social norm may not be held in the same regard within a different culture. Behavior acceptable within one society is equally egregious for another, especially from an ethnocentric perspective. Ethnocentrism is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture - natural and correct - while other cultures are inferior, unnatural, or incorrect. In other words, one's own cultural group is the basis for everything, and all others are considered only in reference to it (Drew, 2021a, para. 1). For example, during the holidays, some Americans find no fault in eating pork whereas others, like Muslim Americans, consider such consumption taboo. According to the Islamic religion, the pig is an unclean animal because it eats slop (which may contain meat itself) thus making it omnivorous and because the animal wallows in its own excrement (El-Rahaiby, personal communication, 2020). Both are reasons why Muslims abstain from the taboo of consuming pork meat. The same applies to language. Fairclough (2015) suggests that language varies based on social identity, interaction, setting, and purpose. Take the English language; the expectation of "proper" or "standard" English differs when in America versus when in England, confirming that language is the result of social conditioning based on cultural history (p. 54-55).

Additionally, norms change over time as society itself changes. For example, in years past, gay and lesbian relationships were considered taboo, as the knowledge of them was shocking and brought about disgust and estrangement. However, most people's attitudes shifted regarding same-sex relationships, so too did the related folkways, mores, and taboos. The same truth applies to language that is considered taboo; as times change, words fall into and out of the category of "taboo language".

Taboo / Strong Language

Types of Taboo Language

Jeffers & Lehisté (1979) as cited in Burrridge (2012) stated, "A taboo word is one which has come under prohibition, usually because of the sacred status of the reference of the word in question or because of fear inspired by the referent" (p. 88). Taboo language, also called "profanity" or "strong language", is grouped within five general categories: **religious/super-natural** (e.g., *holy shit*, *Goddammit*, *hell*), **sex-related** (e.g., *cunt*, *fuck*, *whore*, *motherfucker*), **death and disease** (e.g., *pox*, *cancer*), **body parts and scatology** (e.g., *pussy*, *ass*, *piss*, *shit*), and **racial slurs** (e.g., *nigger*, *chink*, *spic*) (Devlin, 2020; Mirus et al., 2012; Pinker, 2007). Some lesser-known categories include names (e.g., *Oh, God!*, *Jesus Christ!*, names of emperors of ancient China) and, in other languages, fearful beasts, like the *bear* or the *wolf*. Some cultures believe that particular animals are too scary to be mentioned by name, and will use euphemisms when referencing them (Burrridge, 2012, Devlin, 2020).

Profanity and Emotions

During a 2010 talk given for the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA), Steven Pinker states that the various categories of profanities each elicit a specific emotion within the human brain that "automatically register in the brain with their meaning, including the negative emotion" (17:07-17:28). The taboo of a supernatural nature produces feelings of awe or fear of a powerful being, while words regarding death/disease bring up feelings of dread. Language alluding to sexuality and bodily effluvia evokes emotions of repulsion and disgust, respectfully. Finally, racial slurs and other references to "disfavored people in groups" (21:17) cause feelings of hatred and contempt. Years

before, George Carlin drew attention to the matter in his 1972 stand-up comedy monologue *Seven Words You Can Never Say On TV*, listing *shit*, *piss*, *fuck*, *cunt*, *cocksucker*, *motherfucker*, and *tits* as words so egregious that they wound up listed in House Resolution 3687, the “Clean Airwaves Act” (Congress.gov, 2003). Though the words within these categories have changed through the years, based on what society deems most scary and most interesting (Melissa Mohr, as cited in Malady, 2013), one thing remains the same: many people’s sensibilities are offended by the use of such words.

Reasons for Taboo Language

Pinker (2007) further outlines the reasons for and the uses of taboo language. The author states at least five different ways to use profanity: **descriptive, idiomatic, abusive, emphatic, and cathartic**. Vsauce (2013) helps to simplify Pinker’s thoughts by explaining that descriptive swearing uses dysphemism by substituting a harsh and unpleasant expression for a more neutral one, allowing one to add the context of negative emotion to the referral of something in the real world. One would say “a steaming pile of *dog shit*” rather than “a steaming pile of canine excrement”.

Idiomatic swearing establishes a casual, easy-going atmosphere where familiarity exists between interlocutors, and nobody is offended. Using African American Vernacular English as an example, Interlocutor A says, “Okay, *Bitch!* I see you!” (meaning, “you are looking great”), to which Interlocutor B replies, “*Shiiiiiiid*, I’m just tryin’a be like you.” (meaning, “thank you for the compliment”).

Abusive swearing uses words to insult, humiliate, and/or objectify disfavored people, as in the exclamation, “*FUCK YOU, cocksucker!*” The phrase “*FUCK YOU*” is

considered the insult, while “*cocksucker*” is the objectification. Emphatic swearing changes the connotation of a swear from taboo to practical, conveying that a person’s current emotions in emphasizing something matter more than proper social conduct, as in “that is *bloody fucking* brilliant!”

Cathartic swearing provides a sort of relief from pain, a medical phenomenon known as *lalochezia* (Taylor, 2017). Animals will make noises when in pain or in order to sound an alarm – cathartic taboo serves the same function. Stub a pinky toe, and see what words escape in agony. Stephens et al. (2009) even conducted a scientific study that proved that humans, while holding their hands in a bowl of ice water, can withstand the pain longer while speaking profane words than while speaking “regular” words. Cathartic swearing also provides an, oftentimes satisfying, emotional release, and can sometimes emulate physical aggression (Jay, 2009).

Finally, coprolalia is the medical term used to describe the involuntary verbal outbursts, or “tic”, of socially-inappropriate remarks. It is normally associated with Tourette Syndrome (Tourettes Association of America, n.d.), but can also be a symptom of dementia, epileptic seizures, traumatic brain injury, and several additional conditions (Van Lancker & Cummings, 1999). Similar tics had also manifested in and were studied of a 29-year-old deaf Englishman, who would produce inappropriate signs, gestures, and fingerspelled words in British Sign Language, leaving researchers to ponder whether the inappropriateness was a matter of phonetics or semantics (Morris, et al., 2000). Regardless of the function of the profanity or the language of production, a question emerges, “Who decides which words are good and which ones are bad?”

Origins of Taboo Words

As mentioned, taboo language evolved with a society that was also ever-changing. What was considered taboo during the Renaissance is acceptable now in the 21st Century, and other words and phrases have adopted the moniker of “taboo”. McWhorter (2021) states that three main eras govern what is considered taboo: the age when the worst words spoken were about religion; the period when the worst possible words were about the body; and the days when the worst things to be said were about groups of people. With each span of time, people’s sensibilities are offended in different ways. For example, “midget” or “dwarf” were terms used to refer to people of a small stature, whereas today, they are not considered politically correct and have deferred to the phrase “little person”. Conversely similar is the word “occupy”, once used to describe the private and dirty act of sexual intercourse during the 16th and 17th Centuries, but by today’s standard is mild and evokes no reaction. Additionally are words that were originally offensive but have since been reclaimed as terms of endearment: “bitch”, “nigga”, “queer”.

It is believed that words are considered “bad” based on class differences (Mills, 2004; Vsauce, 2013, Zwillich, 2013). Vsauce’s Michael Stevens (2013) states that lower class medieval Englanders communicated in a Germanic language while the upper class spoke words more related to French and Latin. The example given was the names of *animals* that the lower class handled (cow, deer, sheep) versus the names of the *meats* that the upper class ate (beef, venison, mutton, respectively). English as we know it today is a direct descendant of this language divide, with some words maintaining their gritty lower class connotation. Mills (2004) argued that stereotypes of

class, race, and gender exist, and one's language use (and politeness, discussed later) will be labeled accordingly. She states that lower class people - working class - tend to be louder and more profane/taboo than those of middle and upper classes. John McWhorter, as interviewed on *The Takeaway* podcast, believes that language will continue to evolve, and taboo will eventually center even more around class statuses. Slurs and phrases that cause no nevermind today (such as "cracker" or "salt of the earth") will take on a new meaning a significance 50 or so years into the future (Zwillich, 2013).

Scientific Effects of Taboo / Strong Language

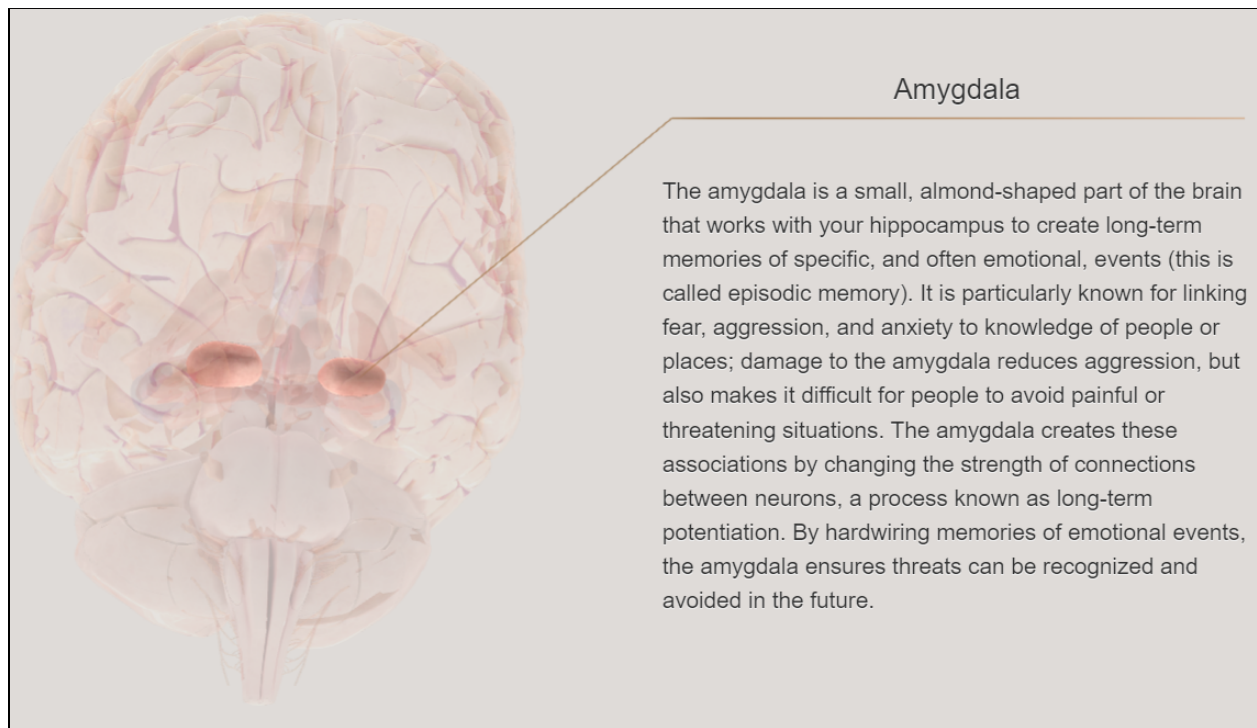
Swearing stimulates different body systems and parts of the brain than does regular language. (Vsauce, 2013) Emotional responses are classified in two ways: valence, meaning how pleasurable (or not) an emotion is; and arousal, meaning how strongly an emotion is felt (Byrne, 2017). Recalling the experiment conducted by Stephens et al. (2009), the study showed that volunteers' heart rates and galvanic skin responses (sweaty palms) increased while swearing, which helped to curb the painful effects of their fingers in ice water.

This is largely the case because profane and taboo words likely trigger the flight or fight response controlled by the amygdala (see Figure 1), the portion of the brain responsible for emotions, particularly fear and threat detection (Shere, 2015). Swears seemingly set off an alarm, to which the amygdala awakens, and the body responds accordingly. Additionally, research shows that both hemispheres of the brain work in tandem when processing taboo / strong language: the left hemisphere is responsible for language while the right hemisphere controls emotions (Byrne, 2017; Zetlin, n.d.), very

similar to an interpreter's brain, that uses several parts at the same time (such as the Broca's area, caudate nucleus, and putamen, and many more) to produce simultaneous interpretation (Racoma, 2019).

Figure 1

The Amygdala of the Human Brain



Note: Image adapted from the 3D Brain, developed by Matt Wimsat and Jack Simpson.
http://www.brainfacts.org/3d-brain#intro=false&focus=Brain-limbic_system-amygdala

Different Attitudes Regarding Taboo / Strong Language

Religion, interwoven into our daily lives, traditions, and practices, has played an important role in shaping societies and cultures for centuries (Tungjitcharoen and Berntsen, 2020). Economic and political controls established the initial practices of censorship of “bad” language in the late 16th century and were perpetuated by the Puritan Church, who believed that taboo language, like swearing and blasphemy, was offensive and attempted to create legislation to control it (McEnery, 2006). Profane language was considered less a human expression than an animal's howl (bestial)

(Byrne, 2017). Mohr (2013) adds that society evolved, becoming more shameful of things and self, so topics like bodily excrement and sexuality became more private and profane. Oaths and swears, much more revered in days past, especially when creating an oath to God, were being replaced by vain oaths and eventually developed into the swear words we use today.

Potentially, people believe time and place are critical in the use of taboo language; the audience also affects the appropriateness of such language use. For example, Santa, after over-shooting the chimney, exclaims a tame “Fiddlesticks” instead of a forceful “Fuck!” due to its more appropriate nature in the presence of children (Spinney, 2007). In fact, in 1978, the Federal Communications Commission determined that offensive language should not be broadcast during certain times of day when children are in the audience, as children are labeled “vulnerable listeners” (Jay, 2009).

Research has determined that multilingual people tend to feel more anxiety when interpreting taboo words and phrases into their heritage language, as taboo words have a stronger emotional force (Dewaele, 2004; Harris, 2004). Conversely, taboo words in languages learned later in life have less emotional control on the speaker, and non-heritage language users may choose to distance or detach themselves from the message (Dewaele, 2004). Regardless of the specific attitude toward the use of taboo language, the concept is likely not going away any time soon. As stated, language evolves, and as some words fall out of disfavor, others adopt the “taboo” moniker, thus this class of words, we will have with us always, in one fashion or another.

Taboo in American Sign Language (and other sign languages)

Regardless of a culture and its language, taboos exist. Though not often realized, a country's sign language culture can differ from its spoken language culture. Therefore, the notion of taboo may also be different between the two, since language use varies according to social identity, setting, and defined purpose; for example, English spoken in America differs from English spoken in Britain (Fairclough, 2015, p. 54). "Particular taboo words vary from one language community to another. If you translate the swear words in one language into another, often you don't get the same effect" (RSA, 2010, 18:00-18:10).

American Sign Language (ASL) is no different. In at least two very detailed studies, the phenomenon of profanity in American Sign Language has been explored in depth (Mirus et al., 2012; Napoli et al., 2012). Lexicon has been dissected regarding handshapes, compounding and incorporation, blending, and other concepts; syntax has also been equally examined. Books have been written regarding sex- and drug-related content (Woodward, 1979; Woodward, 1980; Allison O & Van James T, 2011), much to the chagrin of heritage sign language users. At times, Deaf people themselves have given a glimpse into the fun behind swearing in ASL, as presented in a Facebook video by Queen Foreverrr (2018).

While it may seem fun to learn profanity in ASL, there is also a great deal of responsibility for non-heritage language learners to properly use the signs while at the same time avoiding any risk of culturally appropriating the usage of the signs. This responsibility is even greater for ASL interpreters, who work between the Deaf consumer and the hearing client, facilitating communication between the two and

eliminating any language barriers. Thus, voicing any signs of profanity (save for racial slurs, discussion forthcoming) becomes imperative for rendering the message faithfully, as charged by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) (2005).

As previously mentioned, taboo statements are, at times, difficult to translate between languages, even sign languages. For example, the taboo gesture of the middle finger to signify “fuck you/fuck that” in American Sign Language (Queen Foreverrr, 2018) takes on a completely different meaning in Japanese Sign Language (SignTV2009, 2012), and still another meaning in Taiwanese Sign Language (Seek the World, 2022) (see Figure 2). Thus, there is not a clear cut translation across cultures and languages.

Figure 2

The Use of the Middle Finger in Different Sign Languages



Note: The first image is “fuck” in American Sign Language”. The second image is “brother” in Japanese Sign Language, with the sibling designation (older or younger) determined by directional movement. The third image is “so-so” in Taiwanese Sign Language, signified by a slight back and forth shake.

A Note About Slurs

Racial slurs are derogatory terms created to insult, dehumanize, and/or oppress a person of a different culture. English encompasses many racial slurs, some of which have been incorporated into ASL. For the purpose of this research paper, however,

these signs will not be presented or explained. While it is imperative for interpreters to recognize and appropriately voice various slur signs, the goal of this paper is not to equip interpreters with more tools of oppression but rather to create awareness of patterns of work. If desired, an interpreter can research such signs and store them in their toolbox for necessary recall.

Interpreter Navigation of Taboo / Strong Language

It is the obligation of every interpreter to exercise judgment, employ critical thinking, apply the benefits of practical experience, and reflect on past actions in the practice of their profession ... The driving force behind [the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct] is the notion that the interpreter will do no harm. (RID, 2005, p. 1)

Interpreters have access to many aspects of their consumers' lives; some are professional and others are extremely personal. As a part of the dynamic exchange between consumer, interpreter, and client, a level of trust is developed, and perceptions are formed of everyone involved, both accurately and inaccurately.

Napier et al. (2017) discuss the central role of trust that an interpreter holds while also examining the importance of the accuracy of representation. They state that the ASL interpreter's responsibility is to appropriately exercise their interpersonal domain of power, empowering the consumer to trust the interpreter to let them lead because the interpreter has made it clear to all interlocutors that the consumer is indeed in the lead. Napier et al. state, in addition, as a matter of establishing trust, that the ASL interpreter must recognize their role in accurately representing their consumers, an argument previously presented in Feyne's 2015 research on the hearing museum evaluator's

perception of the deaf docent's knowledge and ability based on the work of ASL interpreters. Feyne (2015) notes that the communicative choices that an interpreter makes on the lexical, sentential, phrasal, and discourse levels have implications on assessments of competence of deaf professionals (p. 54).

Language users potentially avoid the use of linguistic “nuclear devices” (taboo language) if they are unsure about the emotional force and potential effects (Dewaele, 2004). Following the concept of “do no harm”, interpreters at times may take care to linguistically navigate offensive utterances (spoken or signed), as they can harm people the same way physical blows do due to problematic emotive and aversive properties (Jay, 2009).

Another reason why interpreters may choose linguistic gymnastics around taboo language is because of “the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62), which is largely tied to issues of identity. Positive identity one claims typically for themselves and is affected by the treatment of others (Goffman, 1967, as cited in Culpeper, 2019). People tend to avoid negative identities. Thus, because swearing tends to make one seem unintelligent, uncouth, or of lower class stature, people will avoid the disfavor.

Dean and Pollard (2013) took the concept of the Demand Control Model, originally developed by John Karasek in 1979, and applied it to the role of American Sign Language interpreting. They outline the primary types of demands that an interpreter may experience during an assignment: **environmental** (the general setting, happening around the interactants), **interpersonal** (the interaction between the interlocutors), **paralinguistic** (both source language and target language), and

intrapersonal (the interpreter's personal physical and mental navigations). It is arguable that the paralinguistic and intrapersonal demands of voicing taboo language are the most pressing for the interpreter to address, though environmental (e.g., a school or a church) and interpersonal (e.g., an audience including children) demands also affect the controls applied to best articulate a taboo source message.

Historical Research Lenses

While research on taboo / strong language is relatively new, the research conducted on interpreting taboo is more so in its infancy and has been studied from only a few lenses. Some investigators have paid attention to interpreting taboos between spoken languages. Jacobsen (2008) and Mason & Stewart (2001) both analyze courtroom interpreting and focus on how the interpreters navigated face-threatening acts (FTAs) within the speech events. They determine that interpreters will modify the FTA to save their own face, while at the same time changing the meaning of the interaction. Some studies determined that gender plays a factor in interpreting decisions regarding taboo language. Magnifico & Defrancq (2016) determined that female interpreters add up to three times more hedges than their male colleagues. Research also suggests that female interpreters tend to add more politeness markers to their interpretations (Mason, 2008; Nakane, 2008, as cited in Magnifico & Defrancq, 2016).

Savvalidou (2011) studied FTA modifications of political dialogue from spoken Greek into Greek Sign Language and realized that during the course of the modification, the interpreter also presented an altered image of the speakers, who usually carefully choose words that then shape their political identity. However, research from the

reciprocal lens of sign language into the spoken language (no matter the language) has yet to be unearthed.

Gaps in Research

At least two studies have been completed that discuss how an ASL interpreter should approach interpreting taboo. Mouallem (2015) and Murphy (2012) both claim that taboo is a class of language that can no longer be ignored, despite the difficulty of navigating such concepts between cultures and languages (it is important to note that Mouallem's and Murphy's perspectives are interpreting ENG into ASL). As if answering the question, "How should interpreters be educated and professionally prepared to understand [the representation] aspect of their role?" (Napier et al., 2017), both Mouallem (2015) and Murphy (2012) suggest that interpreters receive specific training in taboo language to handle the responsibility properly. Such a curriculum would also be beneficial in general collegiate education, especially for English as a second language students, so they develop robust cultural mediation skills (Finn, 2017).

To date, no research has been discovered analyzing the taboo source message from ASL into ENG, let alone the feelings behind the decisions that an interpreter makes when voicing such a class of words. Nor has any research been uncovered discussing racial/ethnic implications in interpreting taboo from ASL to ENG and whether or not an interpreter has an unconscious bias toward or against signers of a different background. This research project seeks to analyze both concepts and synthesize them with the current discussions on interpreting taboo / strong language.

This study seeks to answer the specific research questions:

- How do hearing sign language interpreters react to taboo and strong language and the responsibility to voice such language from ASL to ENG during the interpreting process?
- What effects are created by an interpreter's perceived negative reaction to taboo language and how do those effects impact an interpreter's subsequent decisions regarding how to voice such a source message?

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The current study was conducted using a phenomenological approach, meaning based on the (perceived) commonality of a lived experience of a particular type of individual (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hale and Napier, 2013), namely the hearing ASL interpreter. The phenomenon of interest in this research study was the hearing ASL interpreter's emotional reaction (if any) to signed taboo language and the voicing thereof.

Participants

Participants were recruited using two main methods: social media posts and email. **Social Media:** The recruitment flier (see Appendix A) and script (see Appendix B) were posted on Facebook within several specific interpreting-related groups: American Sign Language Interpreters of Color; Black American Sign Language; Discover Interpreting!; Divine 9 Signing Community; LUNA ASL Terps; LUNA BIPOC ASL Interpreters; Reality of ASL Interpreting: Black, Indigenous, People of Color (ROI BIPOC); RID Interpreters and Translators of Color Member Section (ITOC). **Email:** The recruitment flier was emailed to potential participants in two different ways. The

associated script was adapted based on the email method used. *Secondary Email/Snowballing*: The researcher requested direct-contact colleagues to forward the participation request to other interpreters within their local area. For example, a direct contact in Georgia forwarded the request to other Georgia interpreters. The researcher did not accept participation from direct-contact colleagues for fear of skewing the results. *Email Listservs*: The researcher requested managers of interpreting-related listservs to forward the request to members of the listserv: African American/Black interpreting distribution list; mdk12 terps; NAOBI-Metro Chgo Chpt.

The target population of participants included hearing ASL interpreters of varying experience. In order to avoid overlooking potentially valuable participants, there were no stipulations applied to recruitment except that the interpreter should be hearing, since hearing is the component directly associated with voicing. Based on expressed interest and a first-come, first-served basis, the researcher emailed both the Consent Form (see Appendix C) and the Demographic Survey (see Appendix D) to thirty-nine initially-interested individuals. Completion of each form was required for acceptance into the study. Permission for recording the one-on-one session was embedded within the Consent Form. Upon receiving both documents from a potential participant, and after a thorough review, the researcher used Doodle (www.doodle.com) to schedule a one-on-one session to take place via Zoom.

Of the thirty-nine, one person did not schedule an interview after submitting the necessary documents. One person did not show up for their scheduled interview. Two people needed to reschedule, but a suitable time was not found. Nine did not submit either or both required documents and could not be scheduled for an interview. One

person withdrew after determining their voicing skills needed improvement before full participation in the research. One person withdrew their interest because they were uncomfortable with their data potentially being used in future research. Therefore, twenty-four participants were interviewed. For data analysis purposes, each participant was assigned a Code Identifier, consisting of their initials and the last four digits of their phone number.

Participant Intersectionalities

Intersectionality is an awareness that people's various social identities - race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. - can overlap (Steinmetz, 2020), helping one understand the perspectives from which they view themselves, the broader society, and/or a specific experience. The intersectionality of the research participants is critical in understanding their viewpoints (historical or otherwise) regarding interpreting taboo language.

Of the twenty-four participants, five (20.83%) identified themselves as Black/African-American (one participant specifically clarified their identity as "mixed-race", however, decided for the purpose of the Demographic Study to select African-American). Of the remaining nineteen participants, one identified as "two or more identities", while the rest were white (75%). Three participants selected "prefer not to answer" on the Demographic Survey (see Appendix D, question 5); however, during the interview, they disclosed their race/ethnicity as Caucasian. These numbers are compared to self-reported data provided by RID as part of the 2019 Annual Report, as shown in Figure 3.

The participants yielded a spectrum of ages, ranging from 18-24 years to above 64 years old. The majority of the participants fell within the 35-44 age range (37.5%).

Figure 4 shows the complete breakdown of ages among the participants.

Figure 3

Breakdown of Self-Reported Racial Demographics

RID FY2019 Annual Report Plain Text PDF · PDF

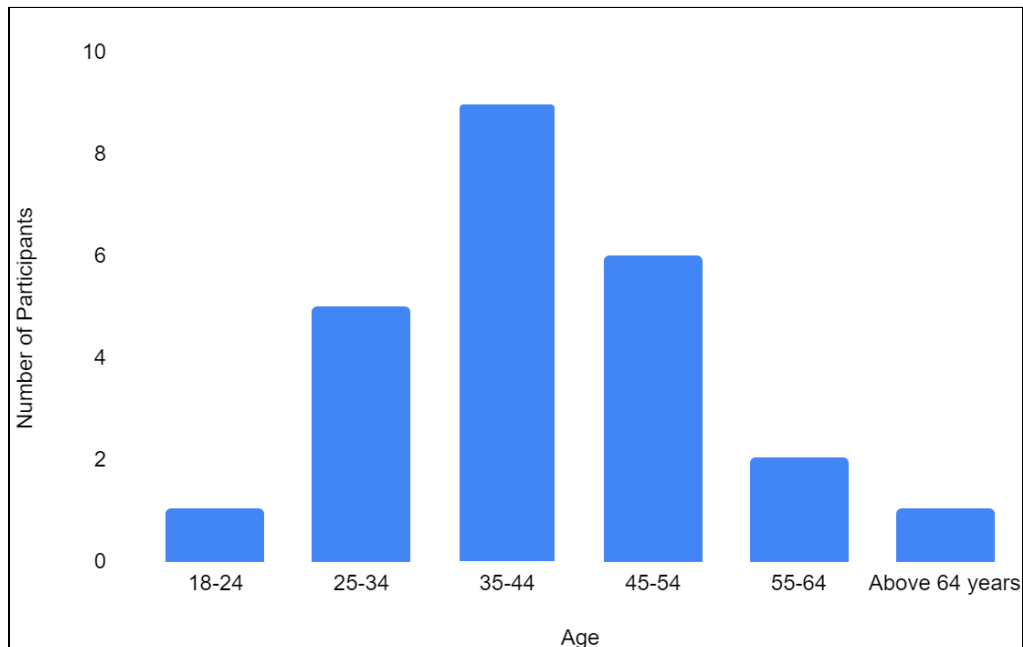
Total Members
14,452

Table MS&GA 2: Membership Demographics by Region (Self-Identified)

	Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V	International	Totals
African American	85	258	78	50	120	1	592
American Indian/Native Alaskan	17	56	24	38	68	0	203
Asian American/Pacific Islander	28	45	18	17	102	0	210
European American/White	1744	2232	1967	1233	2123	16	9315
Hispanic/Latinx	99	172	47	129	235	2	684

Figure 4

Ages of Participants

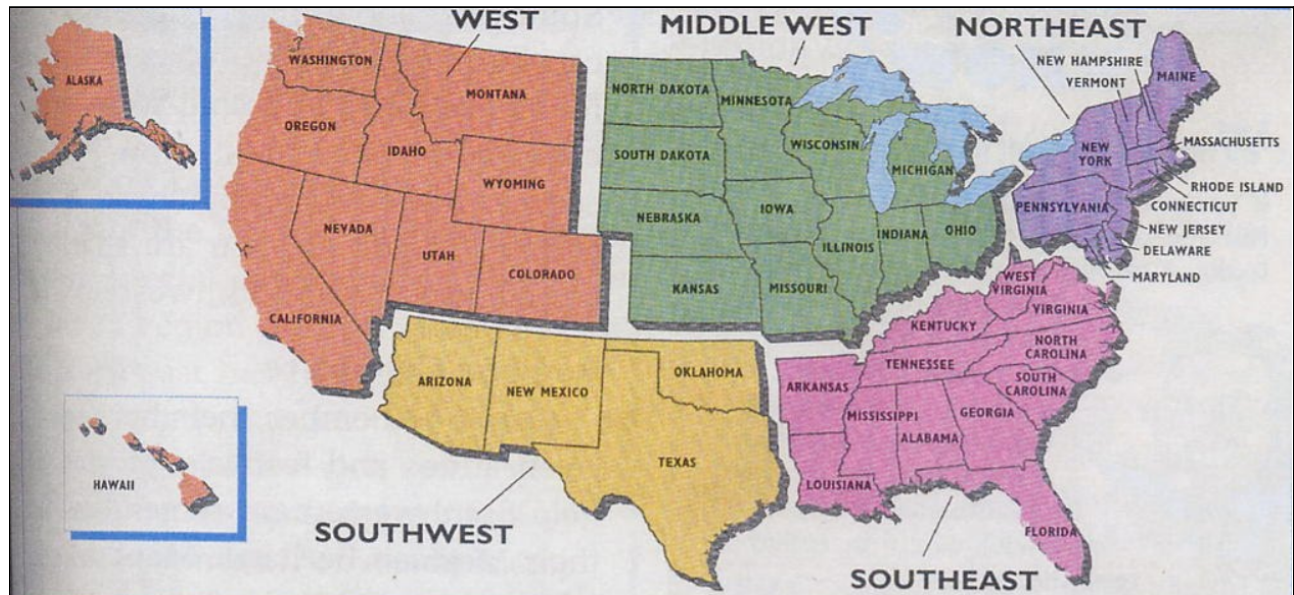


The participants primarily identified as either male (20.83%) or female (70.83%). One participant self-identified as Trans-Masculine; another self-identified as Gender Expansive/Demiflux Female. Regarding religion, nine individuals (37.5%) selected Christianity as their religion of practice, two Agnostic (8.33%), and one Judaism. Nine people chose “Other” because they did not feel their religion fit cleanly into the categories provided; still, three others preferred not to say. Finally, participants were selected from a variety of locations within the United States, encompassing all regions, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 5.

Table 1
State Representation of Participants

Region	State	Number of Participants	Regional Representation (% of Total)
Midwest	IN	1	8.33
	OH	1	
Northeast	MA	1	20.83
	MD	3	
	ME	1	
Southeast	GA	2	37.5
	LA	1	
	NC	2	
	SC	1	
	WV	1	
	Washington, D.C.	2	
Southwest	AZ	1	12.5
	OK	2	
West	CA	2	20.83
	CO	1	
	NV	1	
	WA	1	

Figure 5
Geographic Distribution of Participants



Note: Image borrowed from <https://sites.google.com/site/mpes165/fifth>.

Participant Certification and Experience

Again, with no experience stipulations placed on participants, the research project attracted interpreters with a wide range of experiences. The various certification types and experience levels, respectively, are shown in Tables 2 and 3. Though most participants do not hold an interpreting certification (41.67%), their language skills, variety of settings (see Figure 5), and years of experience (see Figure 6) allowed them the ability to participate in the research project effectively. The majority of the participants have been actively interpreting for 11-15 years (33.33%), followed by 6-10 years (16.67%) and more than 25 years (16.67%).

Table 2
Types of Experience

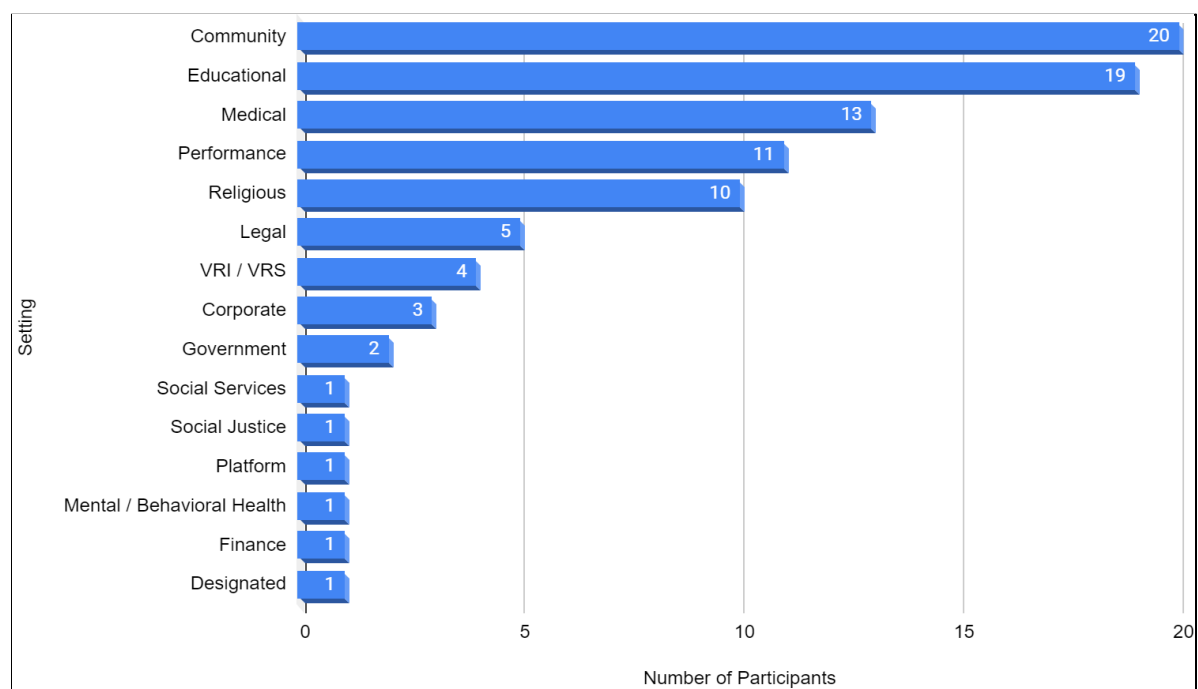
Type of Experience	Number of Participants	Percentage of All Participants
Novice (0-5 years)	3	12.5%
Experienced interpreter (more than 5 years)	21	87.5%
Certified (see Table 2)	14	58.33%
Non-Certified	10	41.67%
Staff	13	54.17%
Freelance	11	45.83%
Full-time	19	79.17%
Part-time	5	20.83%
Child of Deaf adult (CODA)	1	4.2%
Graduate of interpreter training program (ITP)	22	91.67%
Other introduction into Deaf Community	2	8.33%

Note: Interpreters reported working in various settings, including K-12, post-secondary, medical, legal, community, performance, religious, etc., as shown in Figure 5. One participant identified as a SODA, “Sibling of Deaf Adult”.

Table 3
Types of Interpreting Certification

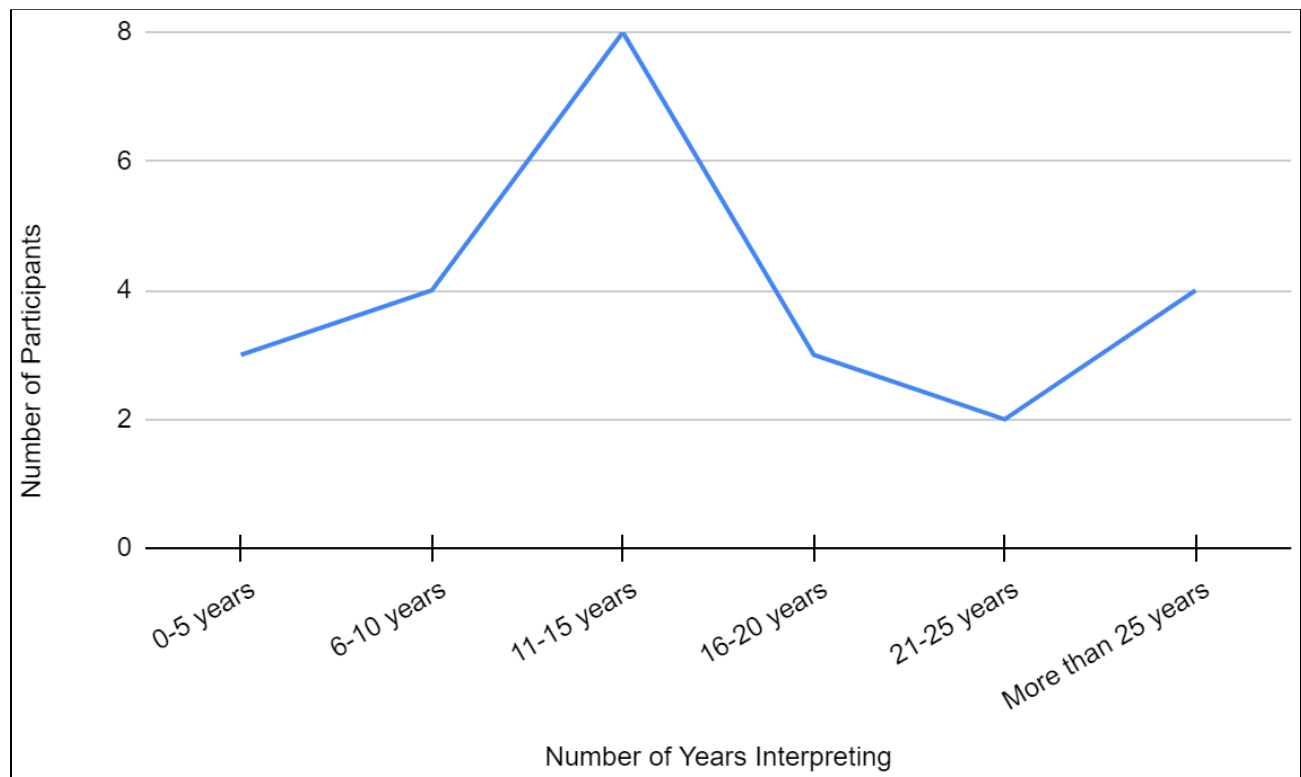
Type of Certification	Number of Participants	Percentage of All Participants
NIC - National Interpreter Certificate	8	33.33%
NIC Advanced	2	8.33%
CI - Certificate of Interpretation	5	20.83%
CT - Certificate of Transliteration	5	20.83%
ED:K-12 - Educational Certificate	2	8.33%
SC:L - Specialist Certificate: Legal	1	4.17%
OTC - Oral Transliteration Certificate	1	4.17%
BEI Master	3	12.5%
BEI Court Interpreter Certificate	1	4.17%
Not Certified	10	41.67%

Figure 6
Interpreting Settings



Note: Many participants have experience working within multiple settings.

Figure 7
Number of Years Interpreting



Data Collection

Slight deception, as reviewed and vetted by the Institutional Review Board, was used in recruitment and the opening scripts of the discussion sessions, eliminating any mention of taboo / strong language. As Byrne (2017) states, humans are conditioned to behave in ways deemed desirable by others, thus if a volunteer expects to be tested about a specific thing, they will do their best to present themselves as the “ideal candidate” (p. 56). Knowing this, the phrase “taboo language” was omitted, and no description of the impending stimuli was provided, including context information to minimize the potential of rehearsed/practiced responses to possible stimuli to be presented. It was important that the participants not be aware of the nature of the content of the study because they potentially may not have presented a natural reaction

to the stimuli during the session. The goal was to recognize *natural* feelings toward taboo language; if the participant was aware of the use of taboo language, they could have mentally prepared before the session, thus skewing their natural reaction to the research.

During the Zoom sessions, each participant voiced a signed video containing neutral content related to the second edition of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) National Interpreter Certification (NIC) exam practice DVD (see the script, Appendix E). Afterward, they completed the Inventory of Emotions (see Appendix F), indicating their feelings about the voiced content. The participants then voiced two additional videos: one with a Deaf white woman signing a personal story that included strong emotion and profanity (see the script, Appendix G); the second, a Deaf Black woman signing a personal story that included racial slurs (see the script, Appendix H). The researcher's intention for using both a white signer and a Black signer was to introduce the possibility of racial bias within an interpreter based on the source communicator.

The Inventory of Emotions was completed a second time, capturing feelings/emotions recognized while voicing the taboo videos. Sessions continued with an in-depth interview (see Appendix I) discussing any recognized emotions and any other thoughts or concerns related to the management of emotions during an interpreting assignment. Each session was recorded using Zoom software for later analysis. Immediately following each session, the researcher emailed a list of resources to assist the participant with managing any emotions triggered during the interview (see Appendix J).

Data Analysis

All interview videos were first transcribed using two independent artificial intelligence platforms (in order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and their stories): www.Sonix.ai and www.Otter.ai. Sonix.ai provided the most accurate transcription, ranging from 91.15% to 96.2% in accuracy, while Otter.ai provided critical keywords. The researcher then corrected any transcription errors while concurrently coding the voicing segments for the following: voiced taboo words (including but not limited to profanity, sex, body parts, body excrement, drugs, death and disease, blasphemy, and racial slurs) and any techniques used to navigate the taboo message (including but not limited to hedges, hesitations, fillers, pauses, facial expressions, body language). Subsequently, the researcher reviewed the interview portion of each transcript to identify key concepts imperative to the research project: active decisions and word choices; the rationale behind why the participant voiced the segments as they did; a participants' historical experiences; and whether or not feelings were generated by seeing the skin color of each stimulus signer. Transcripts were emailed to participants for verification and approval.

Based on the analysis, the initial theme "word choices" was identified to inform the study, relating to the specific words chosen to voice the signed videos. Additionally, the researcher closely examined the interview discussions and identified two additional themes: the "why" behind, and historical/traumatic experiences. The results of the analyzed videos were then compared with information gathered from the Inventories of Emotion in hopes of recognizing correlations.

Chapter IV: RESULTS

Results

Psychology experiments have historically used swear words (either visually or auditorily) to elicit strong emotional responses (Byrne, 2017), as was done in this research study. The results of both Inventories of Emotion were tabulated to reveal the overarching emotional responses that each participant felt when voicing. Each participant's interview transcript was compared to their emotional inventory to identify the feelings associated with, first, the "neutral" stimulus, then the "taboo white signer" and the "taboo Black signer".

Response to Neutral Stimulus

Participants acknowledged a largely negative reaction to the neutral stimulus, which discussed the availability of the NAD-RID NIC exam practice DVD. Largely concerned with the register (formality) of the stimulus, the color scheme of background and signer's clothing (making the hands a bit difficult to see), and the speed at which the information was presented, participants recognized feelings of inadequacy (70.83%), anxiety (66.67%), displeasure (54.17%, mainly regarding the quality of the target message produced), and worry (41.67%). For a complete breakdown of the emotions recognized while voicing the neutral stimulus, see Table 4.

Some of the negative reactions were assuaged by participants' various experiences. For example, one is a proctor of the NIC exam and understood a great deal of the source material to be able to produce a cohesive target message. Another participant is an acquaintance/friend of the signer in the neutral video. Still, a third

recognized the signer's East Coast dialect as one they could use to produce the target message.

Response to Taboo Stimuli

Participants acknowledged a largely negative reaction to the taboo stimuli, which presented a variety of profane words and racial slurs. Largely concerned with the profanity, the frequency of the profanity, and the mismatch in cultural identity and experience, participants recognized feelings of anxiety (58.33%), worry (50%), inadequacy (41.67%), and displeasure (41.67%, largely regarding the appropriateness of voicing a racial slur for an individual with which the participant does not share a race and/or culture). See Table 5 for a complete breakdown of the emotions recognized while voicing the taboo stimuli.

Again, some negative reactions were assuaged by the participants' personal experiences. Some have worked in Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) and/or Video Relay Service (VRS) settings and were able to recognize the various profanities in ASL, while others were able to connect with the signers based on either culture or personality characteristics.

Table 4
Breakdown of Participants' Emotions to Neutral Stimulus

ANGER	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants	LOVE	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants
frustrated	8	33.33%	relieved	8	33.33%
agitated	4	16.67%	satisfied (love)	2	8.33%
annoyed	2	8.33%	caring	2	8.33%
			passion	1	4.17%
			fondness	1	4.17%
FEAR	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants	SADNESS	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants
inadequate	17	70.83%	displeased	13	54.17%
anxious	16	66.67%	powerless	7	29.17%
worried	10	41.67%	guilty	4	16.67%
panic	9	37.50%	regretful	3	12.50%
inferior	7	29.17%	dismayed (sadness)	3	12.50%
helpless	5	20.83%	sorrow	1	4.17%
mortified	3	12.50%	lonely	1	4.17%
dread	3	12.50%	depressed	1	4.17%
frightened	2	8.33%			
hysterical	1	4.17%			
JOY	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants	SURPRISE	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants
satisfied (joy)	8	33.33%	perplexed	7	29.17%
hopeful	6	25.00%	dismayed (surprise)	6	25.00%
pleased	5	20.83%	stimulated	5	20.83%
excited	5	20.83%	speechless	2	8.33%
amused	3	12.50%	shocked	2	8.33%
triumphant	2	8.33%	disillusioned	1	4.17%
zeal	1	4.17%	astonished	1	4.17%
eager	1	4.17%			
delighted	1	4.17%			

Note: Categories defined based on the Juntio Emotion Wheel®, developed by the Juntio Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership.
<https://www.thejuntioinstitute.com/emotion-wheels/>

Table 5
Breakdown of Participants' Emotions to Taboo Stimuli

ANGER	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants	LOVE	Number of Participants	Percent of Total Participants
frustrated	9	37.50%	compassionate	7	29.17%
aggravated	8	33.33%	relieved	5	20.83%
annoyed	5	20.83%	satisfied (love)	4	16.67%
agitated	5	20.83%	fondness	3	12.50%
hostile	4	16.67%	caring	3	12.50%
hate	3	12.50%	passion	1	4.17%
revolted	2	8.33%			
contempt	2	8.33%	SADNESS		
resentful	1	4.17%	displeased	10	41.67%
			regretful	8	33.33%
FEAR			guilty	7	29.17%
anxious	14	58.33%	dismayed (sadness)	7	29.17%
worried	12	50.00%	powerless	5	20.83%
inadequate	10	41.67%	sorrow	2	8.33%
helpless	4	16.67%	hurt	2	8.33%
dread	4	16.67%	grief	2	8.33%
panic	3	12.50%	depressed	1	4.17%
inferior	3	12.50%			
mortified	1	4.17%	SURPRISE		
			dismayed (surprise)	7	29.17%
JOY			perplexed	6	25.00%
satisfied (joy)	8	33.33%	stimulated	4	16.67%
pleased	6	25.00%	speechless	4	16.67%
amused	6	25.00%	shocked	4	16.67%
eager	4	16.67%	astounded	3	12.50%
hopeful	3	12.50%	astonished	3	12.50%
excited	3	12.50%	touched	2	8.33%
delighted	2	8.33%	disillusioned	1	4.17%
zeal	1	4.17%			
triumphant	1	4.17%			
jovial	1	4.17%			
euphoric	1	4.17%			

Note: Categories defined based on the Junto Emotion Wheel®, developed by the Junto Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership.
<https://www.thejuntoinstitute.com/emotion-wheels/>

Chapter V: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS / CONCLUSION

Discussion of Findings

The three themes identified during the data analysis process were *word choices*, *the “why” behind*, and *historical/traumatic experiences*. The discussions held after the completion of the voicing segments provided much needed insight (to both researcher and participant) and were a very valuable experience.

Word Choices

Several participants indicated that they made specific word choices during their interpretations for pretty interesting reasons. For example, seven participants (29.17%) made the conscious decision not to voice either version of the racial slur (“nigger” or “nigga”) but used various euphemisms to express the meaning instead (“the N-word”, “that or those words”, “insulting term”, “calling names”, etc.). Two participants, specifically, were adamant about not saying “nigger” because of their upbringing and the personal associations that taught them to avoid the use of the word:

“I can say “fuckin” and all [that], you know, like I can say the curse words, but I can’t say *those* curse words. I can’t.” (AD2857, personal communication, January 28, 2022, emphasis added)

All of the white participants recognized that the researcher presented as an African American, and acknowledged the internal conflict of “[rendering] the message faithfully” (RID, 2005), or applying cultural competencies with the goal of voicing a contextually accurate but culturally respectful product.

“Oh well ... I’m not saying that here, that’s for *damn* sure.” (CH4691, personal communication, January 30, 2022, emphasis added)

“I am not the right person if this is going to be BASL. I don’t have that cultural skill to navigate that.” (SD5467, personal communication, January 29, 2022)

Additionally, they recognized the inappropriateness of a white-presenting interpreter speaking the term:

“Wow, i’m not the right- I’m not the right fit here, but we’re going to do the best we can with what we’ve got going on.” (AD2857, personal communication, January 28, 2022)

The African American participants felt a bit more freedom in voicing the word because they identify more closely with the culture typically on the receiving end of the slur, but still chose to also incorporate euphemisms in their target message:

“...that’s rolling off my tongue a little bit too easy. Clearly, it’s language that I use, right? So that’s my stuff coming out ... I’m feelin’ a little too comfortable using this word right now ... I’m going to use ‘N-word’ from here on out.” (JW6069, personal communication, January 18, 2022)

Others that chose to voice the insult, made a split decision in the moment (without a lot of time to process), and stuck with that decision throughout the rest of the stimulus. In a different scenario, one participant made an active decision to reduce the redundancy of swear words in the video with the white signer. Many times, the signer used some version of the word “fuck”, but the participant eliminated the repetition of the curse:

“Is she really saying ‘fuck you’ 100 times in a row? My interpretation didn’t include all the extra ‘fuck yous’ ... [but] did I say it enough times to get the point across?” (PB2107, personal communication, January 26, 2022)

Conversely, participants made the active decision to include certain uncomfortable aspects of the source message, staying “true to the message”. Again, regarding the racial slur, one participant felt,

“...the impacts of the point would be lessened if I chose not to say it.” (MN6935, personal communication, January 23, 2022),

while another stated,

“I wanted [the] weight of that word to be in the equation.” (CR5046, personal communication, January 16, 2022)

Still, another participant considered their own personal experiences when making the decision to voice the message as seen:

“And I think about all the times in my life when folks have deferred to the white comfort or [the] cis comfort or the straight comfort at my expense that I just refuse to do that for deaf people. And I think at any point ... when I do this to language or I get hesitant on voicing someone else’s words, deaf people already don’t have enough of a voice. So any time I do this, I’m further ... marginalizing them, taking away their voice. I never want to be that person. And I think just knowing that makes me like, ‘yeah, I’m going to say it because you have a right to say it and you don’t get to say those things enough.’ That’s- that’s my approach.” (CB0407, personal communication, January 23, 2022).

Many other word choices were the result of making active decisions in the moment and committing to the decision made, either to voice or not to voice (that is the question, right?). In hindsight, participants state they could have handled their target messages differently.

“I would have backed up a little bit ... I probably could have not interpreted [it] as a quote and then interpreted it as ‘there was a boy in driver’s ed who called me an N-word’ rather than being so close and [saying] ... ‘you’re a ...’”. (BD4909, personal communication, January 15, 2022).

Regardless of the final voicing product, the participants were certainly faced with a decision, and the choices they made directly influenced the interpreting outcome.

The “Why” Behind

The interesting aspect of this research project was figuring out why interpreters feel the way they do about the messages they are tasked with interpreting. Judgments of emotional intensity vary for different people because they are linked to internal and contextual factors (Dewaele & Moxsom-Turnbull, 2020). Looking at the most commonly cited emotions for the neutral stimulus (inadequate (71%), anxious (67%), and displeased (54%)), they were based largely on the participants’ judgments of their voicing product. Some felt overwhelmed by the formality and professionalism of the video; some felt their receptive skills were not strong enough; others struggled with fingerspelling, thus causing feelings of inadequacy.

“I’m a terrible voicer ... so I’m going to mess this up. So I already started with that” (RG3845, personal communication, January 30, 2022).

“It was just me not feeling like I was adequate or had the knowledge that I needed to do it appropriately...” (JA7957, personal communication, January 21, 2022);

“I need insane prep, especially for educational things and fingerspelling and even having an idea of what they’re going to talk about.” (AR6296, personal communication, January 17, 2022)

Additionally, similar to the experience of testing for national certification, the stimulus could not be paused or repeated for clarity, causing participants to feel a level of anxiety:

“I feel anxious because I feel like I’m never going to get this. So as I’m watching and trying to get the context of the video, I’m never going to catch up.” (JS0094, personal communication, February 5, 2022)

“I know when I’m losing it or when I’ve lost the text, or what if I didn’t catch the full conversation ... [I] definitely felt that inadequacy.” (TB8309, personal communication, February 5, 2022)

When comparing the emotional reactions to the neutral video to those of the taboo videos, the overarching feelings for both videos are generally the same (anxious (58%), worried (50%), and inadequate or displeased (42% for both)), but for different reasons. As stated before, the participants had to make decisions and word choices for the stimulus with the Black signer based on cultural sensitivities, but there are other reasons for navigating taboo / strong language. One participant was concerned for their children being in a nearby room; several participants stated not using taboo in their everyday language and feeling uncomfortable with needing to voice such words, but did so for the sake of the job; one individual stated their current religion of practice being the reason for their discomfort with voicing the profane language, but decided doing so was necessary for the interpretation.

Interestingly, some participants welcomed the profanity contained within the taboo video with the white signer. They mentioned being reasonably comfortable with the content because it is similar to what they encounter during VRI / VRS interpreting jobs. They suggested that the white signer felt more personable, and that they were able to connect better than with the signer of the neutral video. In fact, there were several unique reasons why they felt at ease:

“I was in the military.” (SW6505, personal communication, February 5, 2022)

“I actually like those conversations because I did grow up as a SODA [sibling of deaf adult]. I have a lot of years of social interaction with deaf people with real life experiences just like that.” (SB0398, personal communication, January 17, 2022)

“I love swearing while interpreting ... I feel very comfortable swearing. I feel very comfortable bitching.” (CR5046, personal communication, January 16, 2022)

“I feel like that’s very common where I’m at ... lots of mean angry people around here. Language does not have any effect on me whatsoever as far as like cursing and that kind of thing. It doesn’t bother me.” (CR0212, personal communication, January 16, 2022)

“I didn’t have to filter her. I didn’t have to work so hard at filtering right to be like proper ... a nice, polite lady - because i’m not a nice, polite lady ... I love interpreting in English in these situations and coming up with colorful phrases.” (CH4691, personal communication, January 30, 2022)

There are other examples of this; these responses were the opposite of the researcher’s expectations. It was assumed that people would feel this comfortable with

the neutral video and its lack of taboo / strong language, however, this proved not to be the case.

Another key thing to note is the interpreter's due diligence in representing the spirit of the source message (RID, 2005):

"I really feel strongly that people have a right to represent themselves in any way." (SW6505, personal communication, February 5, 2022)

"If I know that they're committed, I feel like that gives me permission." (AM9469, personal communication, January 25, 2022)

The goal of this research project was to bring awareness to any potential patterns of work when dealing with profane messages and always represent the consumer in the manner in which they prefer.

Historical/Traumatic Experiences

[TIGGER WARNING: molestation, sexual harassment]

Another potential source for the emotions triggered when voicing specific types of profane messages could be historical and/or traumatic experiences. While it is true that people can learn from their experiences, some experiences come with lessons that one may want to avoid in the future. For example, one participant shared a very personal history of childhood molestation and, later in life, found themselves in the position of voicing a group session for sexual predators. The responsibility of the interpreter filtering the molester's signs through their brain and eventually out of their mouth exacted an emotional toll. Those emotions needed to be quelled in order to complete the voicing assignment effectively. Another traumatic example was an interpreter being required to interpret their own sexual harassment. Still young in the profession and not fully aware of the expectation to refrain from conflicts of interest and decline any

assignment that is not “safe, healthy, or conducive to interpreting” (RID, 2005, p. 5).

Thus, many strong emotions were triggered that needed to be “appropriately” handled in order to interpret the session effectively. Without strategies in place, those types of assignments are challenging to endure.

Other uncomfortable and emotional examples include: a female interpreter having to voice for a male deaf sports coach a joke about tattooing a message on his penis that is only legible when erect (CR0212, personal communication, January 16, 2022); an interpreter having to voice a conversation between deaf parents and their hearing children about the parents divorcing, when the interpreter’s own parents are going through a divorce (BD4909, personal communication, January 15, 2022); an interpreter voicing for a mental health patient the desire to instigate a fight with another patient (KV8309, personal communication, January 15, 2022); a deaf person using the interpreter to voice grave dissatisfaction with that very interpreter (CB0407, personal communication, January 23, 2022); a deaf VRI/VRS consumer calling a hospital to ask questions of the nurse tending to their mother, while the interpreter’s own parents were hospitalized with COVID (DH5568, personal communication, February 6, 2022); interpreting a conference on the topic of domestic violence, a topic that “hit a little too close” (CT1120, personal communication, January 24, 2022).

Not all emotional responses are traumatic, however. A participant recounted the first moment they laid eyes on their (now) partner, and how enamored they were in the moment. That, too, is an instance when emotions need to be managed in order to produce an effective voicing product.

In considering the specific research questions that this project sought to answer, the findings were interesting and quite contrary to the researcher's expectations. *How do hearing sign language interpreters react to taboo and strong language and the responsibility to voice such language from ASL to ENG during the interpreting process?*

Generally speaking, the participants navigated the responsibility of voicing taboo language very well, with little overt reaction to the stimuli content. At times, the voiced product contained pauses; however, that seemed to be mostly attributed to the receptive nature of the work which required seeing and then processing the signed source message and producing the voiced target message. At moments of significant pause in voicing, specifically just before voicing the racial slur "nigger" (or its variant "nigga"), participants were either allowing themselves to capture more of the message for context, or they were actively making a decision as to how to handle the signs seen. Only one participant had a very vocal reaction to the racial slur.

What effects are created by an interpreter's perceived negative reaction to taboo language and how do those effects impact an interpreter's subsequent decisions regarding how to voice such a source message? Participants recognized the importance of representing each consumer in the most appropriate, accurate, and natural way possible. Again, honoring the CPC, the interpreter is tasked with avoiding harm to both the consumer and the client; censoring the consumer's message would cause harm to the consumer who has the right to express themselves how they see fit, whereas voicing a slur would potentially cause harm to the client who identifies as a person of a marginalized group (racial, religious, sexuality, etc.).

“It’s shitty, it’s mean, it’s vicious and like there’s nothing worse than having to ... communicate something that’s going to cause harm, and those kind of things are intended to cause harm ... I think that’s where it comes from, because it’s the same feeling like that same sort of anxiety and stress of like causing harm almost.” (CR5046, personal communication, January 16, 2022)

“I can’t escape my whiteness. And so, yeah, no. I’m not going to say those. I’m not, I’m not going to- not with an -a on the end, not with anything. i’m not going to say ... That is going to be what I feel is if ‘do no harm’ is the priority.” (AD2857, personal communication, January 28, 2022)

“There’s also - I mean, not to diminish, just adding in like other oppressed groups like the f-a-g-g-o-t word or even c-o-c-k-s-u-c-k-e-r for, you know, in a LGBTQ, you know, like these are words that have a lot of harm ... there’s a lot of harm that can be done with language.” (TM6182, personal communication, January 17, 2022)

Interpreters should recall the Demand Control Schema model introduced by Dean and Pollard (2013), and employ controls to counteract various imposing demands. Doing so could aid in managing the vicarious trauma that an interpreter may experience from voicing profane and harmful messages in the first person (RH3468, personal communication, January 20, 2022).

How is it possible for interpreters to handle voicing taboo / strong language? How can interpreters best manage their emotions in such situations? One participant suggests that interpreters “deal with [their] own shit before [they] start getting involved in

other people's lives ... therapy works for that" (AM9469, personal communication, January 25, 2022). Mouallem (2015) and Murphy (2012) add other helpful suggestions:

- raise awareness and develop vocabulary surrounding taboo / strong language signs;
- during private time, watch videos in sign that contain taboo / strong language and practice voicing to help become desensitized;
- use processing time to give the brain time to make decisions regarding how to handle the taboo source message;
- use euphemisms with the same vocal emphasis as the original taboo words;
- just do it.

These and other techniques will make the voicing process easier and could possibly minimize the strong emotions that may surface. In this manner, it is possible to provide the best service to the deaf consumer, which is the overall responsibility of the hearing American Sign Language interpreter.

Limitations

The research project is limited in scope because of its small sample size. Should more time be allocated, the research could be duplicated using a larger sample - perhaps 50 to 100 participants - with hopes of capturing more interpreters of particular belief systems and locales. For example, a member of a Jehovah's Witness congregation may have strong adverse reactions to the taboo language and demonstrate creative ways of navigating the *words* of the source message while maintaining the intent.

The two Inventories of Emotion were helpful in capturing information about a participant's emotions. However, the Inventory of Emotions: Subsequent would be better if it provided two separate pages to represent each of the two taboo videos. This way, emotions related to each individual video are kept separate, and data analysis is easier. The current research project required the researcher to rely heavily on the interview transcripts to differentiate emotions for the first taboo video versus the second.

Additionally, the Inventories of Emotion should include more emotions. On multiple occasions, a participant indicated that a particular desired emotion was not available to select; the researcher made sure to inquire about any missing emotions so as to code them during the data analysis process properly.

Future Research

This research project focused on practicing interpreters and omitted anybody currently attending an Interpreter Training Program (ITP). Future research could switch the focus to ITP students at any stage of the program. "So many people, when they go into ITPs, they're going to learn sign language, and the idea of doing the backwards - learning the English that goes with the signs [is not fully considered]" (CG1071, personal communication, January 31, 2022). It is essential to properly train future practitioners, therefore, identifying any emotionally-laden decisions while practicing the art of voicing signed material will make for a better ITP graduate and future interpreter.

The following suggestions were given as ways to generate stronger emotional reactions to the taboo videos. It is important to note that awareness is necessary when working with all types of social identities and that representation matters.

- 1) Swap signers, with a white signer using the N-word and a Black signer showing anger and aggression. With the historical severity of the N-word coming from the

mouths of white people, Black/African-American participants will likely respond in a manner that requires emotional navigation in order to produce a target message successfully. Similarly, stereotypically, Black people are viewed as hostile and violent, so showing a Black signer with exaggerated emotion (specifically anger) will likely trigger reactions in white participants;

- 2) Use male signers (one white and one Black). Considering ASL interpreting is a field dominated by white women, male taboo / strong language may generate various emotions in female interpreters required to voice the content;
- 3) Use other racial slurs, such as “chink” (Asian), “beaner” (Hispanic/Latino), “redskin” (Indigenous Americans), “gypsy” (Romani people), “towel head” (turban wearers), “mosquito” (Muslim), etc. Using a variety of racial slurs will ensure more inclusivity of ethnic identities and provide an opportunity for comparison against “nigger”, used for African-Americans;
- 4) Include offensive LGBTQQIP2AA+ terms, like “faggot” or “dyke”, to be more inclusive of Queer populations;
- 5) Use body parts (tits, dick, pussy, etc.) and excrements (piss, shit, cum, etc.)

Finally, this research could be duplicated, adding a neurological test on the interpreter’s brain to see if taboo language elicits emotions. The results of such a test would correspond to the Inventories of Emotions and produce more scientific data for analysis.

Conclusion

Admittedly, interpreting through emotions can be difficult. As much as practitioners try to remain unbiased, neutral language conduits, it is impractical to expect one to be consistently neutral; while it is possible to present a facade of neutrality, one cannot *feel* neutral (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, as cited in Harvey, 2003). “Internal non-neutrality is an involuntary psychological reflex for well-adjusted persons ... Although it is certainly possible, and often important to temporarily put aside

traumatic memories during an interpreting job, it seems difficult at best to screen out what memories get activated” (Harvey, 2003, p. 207, 210). Therefore, it is best that ASL interpreters develop techniques to navigate emotional responses to source messages.

The ASL interpreter’s recognition of and respect for the dynamic of the consumer’s trust is critical. The interpreter must understand that in order for the D/deaf consumer to trust, they have to feel that they have full access to the conversation and that their message is not being altered or censored in any way. Though generally speaking, Byrne (2017) warns that when [an interpreter controls a Deaf] person’s profane message, the [signer’s] voice is essentially being silenced because the interpreter has interjected their own feelings regarding taboo / strong language. Instead, the interpreter’s goal should be to *empower*, not take away the consumer’s power, even if unintentionally (Suggs, 2012).

In the exception of racial slurs, every attempt should be made to apply cultural competencies and use euphemisms or relay the message in the third person. For example, instead of voicing, “You incompetent nigger!”, the interpreter should say, “You incompetent n-word” or “The consumer has called you an incompetent n-word.” In this case, the CPC should not be used as a reason to perpetuate oppression through linguistic means.

Otherwise, there are specific suggestions that can be employed and skills that can be developed to help an interpreter handle the challenge of voicing messages containing taboo / strong language. The more comfortable an interpreter feels with various types of source messages, the better practitioner they will be and will provide

stronger service to consumers. If that is not reason enough, let the taboo words fly and strengthen that brain in the process!

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APPENDIX A - Recruitment Flier



RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

THE EMOTIONS OF VOICING ASL TO ENG

**ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOICE?
DO YOU FEEL NERVOUS OR INADEQUATE? HAVE YOU
STUMBLER OVER CHALLENGING SOURCE MESSAGES?
WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR EXPERIENCES!**

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERPRETING STUDIES AND COMMUNICATION EQUITY

YOUR INPUT IS VALUABLE!

Help discover:

- 1) if hearing ASL interpreters feel any specific feelings when voicing from ASL into ENG;
- 2) from where said feelings may originate;
- 3) how decisions based on those feelings may affect the interpreting process.

All hearing ASL interpreters welcome!

Research being conducted as part of thesis requirements for graduation from the MAISCE program at St. Catherine University. For more information, contact the primary investigator, Devon E. Wilson, at dewilson383@stkate.edu



APPENDIX B - Recruitment Scripts

Facebook Group Approval Request Script (sent prior to IRB approval):

Good morning.

I am a graduate student at St. Catherine University, within their Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program. I will be starting research soon for my impending thesis (required for graduation), and would like to recruit potential participants from the _____ Facebook group. You are listed as an admin for the group.

May I have permission to post my recruitment flyer (sic), once I have received research approval from the Institutional Review Board?

Thank you for your consideration.

Facebook Group Recruitment Script (sent upon IRB approval; revised to be visually accessible by providing the information of the flier in text format):

Good day.

I am a graduate student at St. Catherine University, within their Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program. I am starting research for my impending thesis (required for graduation) and am searching for hearing ASL interpreters as potential participants.

I have recently received research approval from the university's Institutional Review Board and would appreciate it if you would be involved. Please express your initial interest in the research project by sending me a confidential message directly via Facebook Messenger.

Thank you!

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

The Emotions of Voicing ASL to ENG

Are you excited about the opportunity to voice? Do you feel nervous or inadequate? Have you stumbled over challenging source messages? We would love to hear your experiences!

Help discover:

- 1) If hearing ASL interpreters feel any specific feelings with voicing from ASL to ENG;*
- 2) From where said feelings may originate;*
- 3) How decisions based on those feelings may affect the interpreting process.*

YOUR INPUT IS VALUABLE!

All hearing ASL interpreters welcome!

Research being conducted as part of thesis requirements for graduation from the MAISCE program at St. Catherine University. For more information, contact the primary investigator, Devon E. Wilson, at dewilson383@stkate.edu.

THANK YOU!

Secondary Email/Snowballing Script (sent upon IRB approval):

Good day.

I am a graduate student at St. Catherine University within their Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program. I will be starting research soon for my impending thesis (required for graduation) and am requesting your help in recruiting potential participants.

I have recently received research approval from the university's Institutional Review Board. Would you please disseminate the recruitment flyer (sic) below to all of your local interpreter contacts and have them contact me directly at dewilson383@stkate.edu to express their interest?

Thank you for your assistance.

Devon E. Wilson

MAISCE, St. Catherine University

Email Listservs Script (sent upon IRB approval):

Good day.

I am a graduate student at St. Catherine University within their Interpreting Studies and Communication Equity program. I will be starting research soon for my impending thesis (required for graduation) and would like to recruit potential participants from the _____ email listserv.

I have recently received research approval from the university's Institutional Review Board. Would you please disseminate the recruitment flyer (sic) below to all of your listserv members and have them contact me directly at dewilson383@stkate.edu to express their interest?

Thank you for your consideration.

Devon E. Wilson

MAISCE, St. Catherine University

APPENDIX C - Consent Form

St. Catherine University Informed Consent for a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called “Tell Me How You Really Feel: A Qualitative Look at the Emotions Evoked Within American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters While Voicing from ASL to English”. The study is being done by Devon E. Wilson, a Master's candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Aimee Sever-Hall, MA, assistant professor within the ASL & Interpreting Department at St. Catherine University. Here, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

* Required

1. Email *

Purpose
of
Research

Why are the researchers doing this study?

This study aims to discover if hearing interpreters of American Sign Language (ASL) and its variations feel any specific feelings when confronted with the task of voicing from ASL into English (ENG), and from where said emotions may originate. This study is important because as a general rule established within the RID-NAD Code of Professional Conduct (2005), when facilitating communication between ASL and ENG, interpreters are expected to “do no harm ... [and] render the message faithfully by conveying the content and spirit of what is being communicated” (pp. 1, 3). Failure to do so could produce an inadequate interaction between the hearing client and Deaf consumer and, in extreme instances, could also cause catastrophic results. Approximately 20-30 ASL interpreters – certified and non-certified, staff and freelance – are expected to participate in this research.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

Practitioners of varying sign language interpreting experience from different areas of the United States are being asked to participate in this study.

2. Please initial to show understanding: *

Participant
Activities

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- * Complete a Demographic Survey;
- * Voice one signed video (two minutes);
- * Complete an Inventory of Emotions about the voiced stimuli (emotional baseline);
- * Voice two additional signed videos (no more than five minutes each);
- * Complete the Inventory of Emotions again to acknowledge the emotions felt while voicing the stimuli, and discuss those feelings with the primary investigator;
- * Discuss any related historical interpreting experiences.

In total, this study will take no more than an hour and a half.

What if I decide I do not want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please do not proceed with this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify Ms. Wilson, and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw until February 28, 2022, after which time withdrawal will no longer be possible, as data would have already been collected and de-identified or published. Your decision to participate or to withdraw will have no positive or negative impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

3. Please initial to show understanding: *

Risks /
Benefits

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There is the likelihood of discomfort and uneasiness while personally analyzing and admitting to your voicing style in order to discover patterns of work. There is, however, no risk of personally identifiable information being publicly disseminated. There is no risk of loss of certification as a result of recognition of unfavorable patterns of work, as your questionnaire responses are held in strict confidentiality and will not be shared with any certification governing body.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

Participation in this research study will benefit both the individual interpreter and the profession overall by, first, creating awareness of patterns of work that may adversely affect an interpreting interaction and then creating ways to reduce such patterns. You may personally benefit from this study by way of self-reflection and an opportunity for professional growth and improvement. There are no other direct benefits to you for participating in this research.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

4. Please initial to show understanding: *

Use of
Personal
Information

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will first be de-identified then aggregated in an attempt to discover consensus within practitioner responses. The researcher will keep the research results within a dedicated University Box drive that only the researcher and their advisor(s) will have access to while they work on this project. The researcher will finish analyzing the data by June 2022 and will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you. Any audio recording made will also be stored in the dedicated University Box drive and will be deleted upon the completion of this research project.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, the researcher will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure. You will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Could my information be used for future research?

Yes, it is possible that your data will be used for additional research. All collected data will be de-identified and may be used for future research or be given to another investigator for future research without gaining additional informed consent. Any original data with identifiable information will be destroyed.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If, during the course of this research study, the research team learns about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, they will inform you of these findings.

5. Please initial to show understanding: *

Contact
Information

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you should ask them before you sign this form. Feel free to contact Devon E. Wilson at dewilson383@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Aimee Sever-Hall at amseverhall545@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

Upon submission, you will receive a copy of this form for your records.

6. Please initial to show understanding: *

Consent of
Participation

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be audiotaped as necessary.

My typed name and date indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered and I am at least 18 years of age.

7. Please type your FULL name to indicate consent to participate in this research project. *

8. Please date this consent. *

Example: January 7, 2019

Thank
You!

Thank you very much for being willing to participate in this research study. Your input will be very valuable in bringing awareness to practitioners in our field regarding how their emotions affect their interpreting decisions, which ultimately affect the interpreting process overall.

If at any time you wish you withdraw your consent for participation in this research, please contact Ms. Devon E. Wilson directly and in writing at dewilson383@stkate.edu.

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Google Forms

APPENDIX D - Demographic Survey**Demographic Survey**

* Required

1. Email *

2. Please create a six (6) digit code identifier consisting of your first and last initial and the last four (4) digits of your telephone number. For example: DW1645 *

3. What is your current age? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 18-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ Above 64 years

4. As what gender do you identify? *

5. As what sexual orientation do you identify? If you are uncomfortable answering, please type "prefer not to answer". *

6. What are your pronouns? *

7. What is your race / ethnicity? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ African
- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Latino/Hispanic
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Two or more identities (specify in next question)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. Please indicate which two or more racial / ethnic identities:

9. Where do you currently perform the majority of your interpreting work? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ AL
- ☐ AK
- ☐ AZ
- ☐ AR
- ☐ CA
- ☐ CO
- ☐ CT
- ☐ DE
- ☐ FL
- ☐ GA
- ☐ HI
- ☐ ID
- ☐ IL
- ☐ IN
- ☐ IA
- ☐ KS
- ☐ KY
- ☐ LA
- ☐ ME
- ☐ MD
- ☐ MA
- ☐ MI
- ☐ MN
- ☐ MS
- ☐ MO
- ☐ MT
- ☐ NE
- ☐ NV
- ☐ NH
- ☐ NJ
- ☐ NM
- ☐ NY
- ☐ NC

- ☐ ND
- ☐ OH
- ☐ OK
- ☐ OR
- ☐ PA
- ☐ RI
- ☐ SC
- ☐ SD
- ☐ TN
- ☐ TX
- ☐ UT
- ☐ VT
- ☐ VA
- ☐ WA
- ☐ WV
- ☐ WI
- ☐ WY
- ☐ DC
- ☐ AS
- ☐ GU
- ☐ MP
- ☐ PR
- ☐ VI

10. What is your employment status? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Full-time staff interpreter
- ☐ Full-time freelance interpreter
- ☐ Part-time staff interpreter
- ☐ Part-time freelance interpreter
- ☐ Retired interpreter
- ☐ Interpreter Training Program (ITP) student

11. What is your religion of practice? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Agnostic
- ☐ Athiest
- ☐ Buddhism
- ☐ Christianity
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Judiasm
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other

12. What is your hearing status? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ hearing
- ☐ Deaf
- ☐ Hard of Hearing

13. Are you a Child of Deaf Adults (CODA)? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. Are you a graduate of an interpreting training program (ITP)? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. If “no”, are you a current student of any interpreter training program? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. What is your highest degree of education: *

Mark only one oval.

☐ High School diploma

☐ Associates degree

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

☐ Ph.D. or higher

☐ Some college

17. Are you currently working in the interpreting profession? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. How many years have you been actively interpreting? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ 0-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ 16-20 years

☐ 21-25 years

☐ More than 25 years

19. In what setting(s) do you interpret? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

☐ Community

☐ Educational

☐ Legal

☐ Medical

☐ Performance

☐ Religious

☐ Other: _____

20. Which of these do you use in your interpreting? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

☐ ASL

☐ MCE

☐ Pidgin

☐ Pro-tactile

☐ SEE 1 and/or SEE 2

☐ Other: _____

21. What certification(s) do you currently hold? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Not Certified
- ☐ NIC
- ☐ NIC Advanced
- ☐ NIC Master
- ☐ CI
- ☐ CT
- ☐ CSC
- ☐ MCSC
- ☐ RSC
- ☐ IC
- ☐ TC
- ☐ SC:PA
- ☐ OIC:C
- ☐ OIC:S/V
- ☐ OIC:V/S
- ☐ CLIP-R
- ☐ ED:K-12
- ☐ SC:L
- ☐ OTC
- ☐ BEI Basic
- ☐ BEI Advanced
- ☐ BEI Master
- ☐ BEI Court Interpreter Certificate
- ☐ OC:B
- ☐ OC:C
- ☐ OC:V
- ☐ Trilingual Advanced
- ☐ Trilingual Master
- ☐ MSS
- ☐ SEE
- ☐ BEI Medical Interpreter Certificate
- ☐ BEI Level I
- ☐ BEI Level II
- ☐ BEI Level III
- ☐ BEI Level IV
- ☐ BEI Level V
- ☐ BEI Level III Intermediary
- ☐ BEI Level IV Intermediary
- ☐ BEI Level V Intermediary
- ☐ EIPA

☐ Other: _____

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APPENDIX E - Neutral Stimulus Script

The 2nd edition of the NAD-RID NIC Practice DVD is now available! The practice exam mimics the format of the NIC exam, providing examples of the current exam which candidates can use for the test preparation. The DVD provides interview and performance vignettes representative of the current exam that can be used for practice. The practice DVD offers NIC candidates another layer of preparation, a resource to help candidates apply different skills, for example, practical analytical and critical thinking skills. As the saying goes, 'practice makes perfect.' The DVD provides a way to prepare and allows NIC candidates to enter the testing site feeling confident and comfortable after experiencing a sample of the exam flow and timing. The new 2nd edition of the NAD-RID NIC Practice DVD gives candidates the opportunity to gauge their process, put skills in practice and prepare for exam day. You can purchase this exam preparation resource in the RID store on the RID website at www.rid.org.

APPENDIX F - Inventory of Emotions

Inventory of Emotions

Please select the emotion(s) you feel associated with the presented stimulus. Select all that apply.

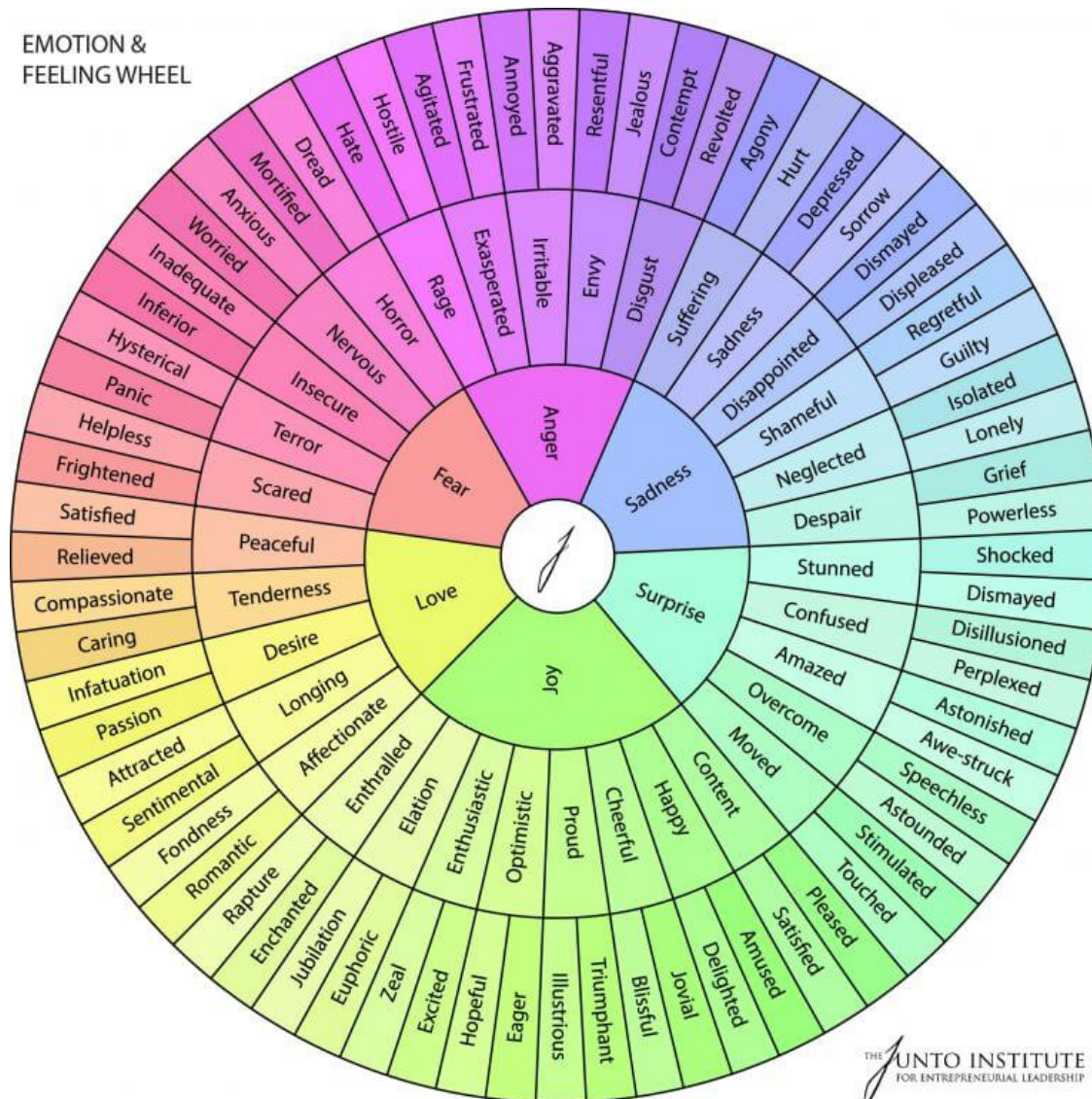
* Required

1. Email *

EMOTIONAL WHEEL

(<https://www.davidhodder.com/emotion-and-feeling-wheel/>)

EMOTION &
FEELING WHEEL



2. ANGER

Check all that apply.

- ☐ aggravated
- ☐ agitated
- ☐ annoyed
- ☐ contempt
- ☐ frustrated
- ☐ hate
- ☐ hostile
- ☐ jealous
- ☐ resentful
- ☐ revolted

3. FEAR

Check all that apply.

- ☐ anxious
- ☐ dread
- ☐ frightened
- ☐ helpless
- ☐ hysterical
- ☐ inadequate
- ☐ inferior
- ☐ mortified
- ☐ panic
- ☐ worried

4. JOY

Check all that apply.

- ☐ amused
- ☐ blissful
- ☐ delighted
- ☐ eager
- ☐ enchanted
- ☐ euphoric
- ☐ excited
- ☐ hopeful
- ☐ illustrious
- ☐ jovial
- ☐ jubilation
- ☐ pleased
- ☐ rapture
- ☐ satisfied
- ☐ triumphant
- ☐ zeal

5. LOVE

Check all that apply.

- ☐ attracted
- ☐ caring
- ☐ compassionate
- ☐ fondness
- ☐ infatuation
- ☐ passion
- ☐ relieved
- ☐ romantic
- ☐ satisfied
- ☐ sentimental

6. SADNESS

Check all that apply.

- ☐ agony
- ☐ depressed
- ☐ dismayed
- ☐ displeased
- ☐ grief
- ☐ guilty
- ☐ hurt
- ☐ isolated
- ☐ lonely
- ☐ powerless
- ☐ regretful
- ☐ sorrow

7. SURPRISE

Check all that apply.

- ☐ astonished
- ☐ astounded
- ☐ awe-struck
- ☐ disillusioned
- ☐ dismayed
- ☐ perplexed
- ☐ shocked
- ☐ speechless
- ☐ stimulated
- ☐ touched

APPENDIX G - White Signer Stimulus Script

*Do you want to know what fucking pisses me off?? On the bus, maybe it's not their fault that they don't have enough money, but I HATE when they fucking pay with coins! [shows dropping coins one at a time] Oh, God dammit! Come on! Like I said, that's not their fault, but come ON! I have an appointment to be at! Son of a bitch! Seriously!! ARRRRRGH! Oh, and sometimes, some people want to mosey down the aisle...FUCKING COME ON!!! I have somewhere to be, you son of a bitch! Damn you! ARRRRRRRRRRRGH! Cock sucker! BITCH! WHORE! You bastard! And other times they use dollar bills that go in super slow, and I'm sitting there like, "Sheesh!" Seriously, I hate riding the fucking bus sometimes! UGHHH! People get on my fucking nerves! Damn, I don't have all fucking day! And some drivers will wait until they are finished paying before they start driving, but other drivers will just take off and people almost fall the fuck down! IndyGo, you fucking suck! UGHHHHHHHH! And that's my story on the bus! *smile**

APPENDIX H - Black Signer Stimulus Script

I'll tell you a story, first, a pretty serious story. The other part is more for educational purposes and to use for discussions, but first, the serious story. When I was in high school, during my sophomore year (10th grade), I took a Driver's Ed class. I had gotten the keys and ended up in an argument with this boy. I think it had to do with what I did with the keys, but I don't really remember. Anyway, the boy said to me, "You Nigger!" That really pissed me off, so I kicked him in the privates. Then I jumped into the car, locked the door, and waited for the teacher to show up, at which time I explained everything that had happened.

Regarding the use of "nigger" or "nigga" as in, "Sup, nigga?", it really depends on the individual. It depends on ...(thinking)... like ... Folks commonly say that if both individuals are Black, then it's not that big of a deal. It mostly depends on their lifestyle. Most of the time, I don't use the term that often ... it really varies. When I'm extremely pissed off, I'll say, "Damn, Nigga" or "That nigga was annoyin' me!" Since I don't curse, it really depends. Sometimes, if a white person says, "What up, nigga", I tell them immediately, "Aht aht aht. You can't use that term." Their response is typically that they have Black friends, but I don't care. Don't call anybody that; don't use that. It's not for you, as a white person. I try to educate them. Other than that, I will sign "nigger" or "nigga", but again, it depends.

APPENDIX I - List of Interview Questions

Interview questions regarding feelings indicated while voicing the stimuli:

- You indicated that you recognized emotions within yourself while voicing these two segments. Please share which emotions you felt, and at what point you felt them.
- Please tell me what about that particular moment of the video caused you an emotional reaction.
- Please consider and share from where you believe those emotions could have originated (if leading is necessary, mention religious upbringing, education, family values, past vocational experiences, etc). Please note: there is no need to recount any experiences of abuse.
- What active decisions did you make to avoid voicing taboo / strong language?
- Did you recognize any differences in how you responded to the white signer versus the Black signer? Please explain your answer.
- If given the opportunity to voice these segments again, what would you change about your target message?

Interview questions regarding any historical experiences related to assignments that have evoked strong emotions/feelings:

- Tell me about an assignment during which you were required to voice taboo / strong language.
- What feelings did you recognize during this historical assignment?
- What strategies did you employ to successfully navigate the assignment?
- If you did not successfully navigate this assignment at the time, what techniques have you learned since that you will apply during the next experience?
- What type of professional development have you undertaken regarding this class of words (if any)?

APPENDIX J - Trigger Resources

www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/emotional-triggers

www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/wander-woman/201507/5-steps-managing-your-emotional-triggers

www.mediatorsbeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/managing-your-triggers-toolkit.pdf

<https://resiliencyresources.com/>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef-Id1LePml

www.calm.com