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**Cultivating Confidence:  
Embodying Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy in Novice Signed Language Interpreters**

By

Kiarah E. Moore

A thesis submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

June 2020

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*For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

*Luke 1:37 KJV*

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Cultivating Confidence:**

### **Embodying Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy in Novice Signed Language Interpreters**

by

Kiarah E. Moore

A thesis submitted to Western Oregon University

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

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Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) are tasked with the responsibility of preparing prospective interpreters for certification and work in the professional field. Many ITPs focus on the student's development of technical skills required for interpreting but ignore the cultivation of the student as a whole (Smith & Maroney, 2018). There currently is limited research concerning the importance of self-confidence in interpreters.

The purpose of this study is to show the significance of self-esteem and self-efficacy on novice interpreter success. Furthermore, the present study investigates the possible use of high-power poses for interpreters coping with lack of confidence. Prospective and novice American Sign Language/English interpreters in the state of Texas were surveyed to explore their levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as

gauge their self-perceived levels of competence and confidence. A small sample of prospective and novice interpreters were also interviewed to test the use of high-power poses and explore confidence at a deeper level than ascertained from the survey.

Results from the survey and interview illustrate the crucial role that confidence plays on interpreter success. They also display the link between competence and confidence. Additionally, coping mechanisms are suggested for dealing with stressful scenarios, including implementation of high-power poses.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Background

Over the years, I have learned that, most of the time, the stories we tell ourselves find a way of becoming true. If I believe I am capable of achieving a goal, I usually am able to do just that. On the other hand, if I believe that I am incompetent and unable to achieve a goal, there is usually an immense struggle towards the finish line—often times leading to failure. Bandura (1989) contended that “most human behavior, being purposive, is regulated by forethought” (p. 1179). This has shown to be true in all facets of my life, including personal, professional, and academic.

The topic of confidence in interpreting first came to me as an undergraduate student in my Interpreter Training Program. Despite my excellent technical training and access to unique experiences designed to cultivate my skills, I found myself always wishing I could be better. I almost never produced an interpretation I was satisfied with. During my senior year, I was assigned an action research project that encouraged me to work on the main attribute I lacked—self-confidence. The act of naming the problem and seeking out a solution was the first step I needed to take so I could tackle this seemingly impassable roadblock. Through research and reflection, I found that much of my problem stemmed from a fear of imperfection. In order to combat this issue, I began implementing high-power poses (discussed in further detail later in this paper) in combination with positive self-talk. I found this duo made an almost instant difference in my interpreting.

After experiencing success in the classroom from using my newfound coping techniques, I decided to try them out in more high-stress interpreting situations, including

my senior capstone theatrical interpreting performances. I even encouraged my classmates to power pose with me and received positive feedback from their personal results.

Once I graduated, the true test came: the Texas Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Performance Exam. This was the one obstacle standing between my fate as either a graduate struggling in “the gap” or a certified, working interpreter in the state of Texas. The pressure to pass was immense. I doubted my skills and felt unsure of my capability to pass. On the day of my exam, I drove to Austin, Texas. I was such a nervous wreck that my hands were sweating on the steering wheel. When I arrived at the testing facility, I paced the waiting area, trying to review everything I had learned over the past four years at my university. By some miracle, I remembered my success with power posing and stood in a high-power pose until it was time to go into the exam.

Once I received my passing results, I could not shake the feeling that my use of power posing as a coping mechanism had helped me pass the state certification exam. The momentary boost of confidence that I get from positioning myself in a high-power pose has aided me in many high-stress interpreting situations. With the progression of time, those momentary boosts have started to last longer, and I have noticed an increase in my interpreting self-efficacy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The journey to becoming an interpreter is different for each person who has chosen this career. Some people are seemingly born into interpreting because of their Deaf parents, while others may be intrigued by the beauty of American Sign Language. As more states are requiring some sort of credentials to interpret, the demand for quality

interpreter education has increased. The requirements for interpreter certification are also evolving. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) requires members to obtain a bachelor's degree before they are permitted to sit for the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) exam (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. [RID], n.d.). BEI currently requires an Associate degree and/or 60 hours of college credit to sit for the performance test (Texas Health and Human Services, n.d.).

Increased education requirements mean that more individuals are taking advantage of Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) across the country. Despite formal interpreter education becoming more of the standard, there is still a “readiness to work gap” experienced by a large number of graduates. This gap refers to the time between graduation and acquisition of interpreter credentials (Cogen & Cokely, 2015). Currently, Cogen and Cokely (2015) describe the goals of undergraduate ITPs to be

to improve current levels of ASL fluency and prepare discerning graduates who can assess risk and determine whether to accept assignments, identify alternative interpreting resources, prepare for assignments, and begin to collaborate with other interpreters as a member of an interpreting team. (p. 30)

While all of these skills are necessary for interpreting students to be successful, current interpreter education “neglects the development of the whole interpreter” (Smith & Maroney, 2018, p. 6).

Speaking to interpreters of varied skill level and years of experience prior to this study has helped me realize that lack of confidence is an issue shared by many in the profession. I found this problem especially crippling for ITP students near graduation or for graduates preparing to sit for their certification exam. Anecdotal evidence shows that

novice interpreters struggle to let go of negative thoughts and hit roadblocks in their skill development. This inevitably causes problems when preparing for certification exams.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The present study has multiple intertwined goals that, together, will hopefully serve as a stepping stone to closing the graduation-to-certification gap. The first objective is to gain a sense of the levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy in novice interpreters. Secondly, factors that cause novice interpreters to lack confidence will be identified. Lastly, I aim to provide insight on the utilization of high-power poses to help interpreters bolster confidence during high-stress situations (e.g., BEI performance exam) as well as suggestions for other coping mechanisms that can be employed to aid in positive interpreter performance.

My hypotheses are as follow:

- There is a relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy in prospective and novice interpreters.
- Self-perceived competence is linked to self-perceived confidence.
- Graduates of four-year interpreting programs will perceive themselves as more competent and confident than graduates of two-year programs and students still enrolled in an ITP.
- The implementation of high-power poses will help improve interpreter self-perceived confidence.

### **Framework**

Anecdotal evidence and personal experience have taught me that technical skills are not the only thing hindering prospective American Sign Language/English

interpreters from reaching their goal of certification. I have encountered numerous ITP graduates who have passed all of their graduation requirements and can seemingly interpret at the basic level, but who have issues becoming BEI certified. When I question these people about what makes the test so impassable, I often hear answers like “I just froze” or “I could not bring myself back after I made that one mistake.” This has led me to believe that a major factor preventing novice interpreters from conquering the BEI exam is a lack of confidence in their skills. Therefore, I have chosen to study confidence in novice interpreters.

After much research, I have come to realize that personality, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and confidence are all interwoven. This study is situated in the larger framework of trait theory. However, the present study is presented from the perspectives of self-esteem and self-efficacy theory.

### ***Self-Esteem Theory***

The term “self-esteem” is typically used to refer to a person’s feelings of self-worth. Global self-esteem or trait self-esteem describes a person’s general feelings about themselves (Brown & Marshall, 2006). Conversely, domain specific self-esteem refers to how people evaluate their abilities and attributes in a particular setting. Rosenberg et al. (1995) asserted that “the more specific the self-esteem is, the more accurately it should predict relevant behavior” (p. 153).

While global self-esteem is usually persistent, domain-specific self-esteem can vary between tasks and often has an impact on people’s feelings of self-worth following a success or a failure (Brown & Marshall, 2006). The present study focuses on the specific

domain of interpreting to measure participants' self-esteem related to their interpreting performance.

### *Self-Efficacy Theory*

Bandura (1994) described self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (p. 2). This explanation suggests that self-efficacy is related to a person’s specific goals and the self-belief that the person can achieve those goals. In contrast, confidence measures look at a broad array of domains and situations (Stankov et al., 2014). Self-efficacy relates more specifically to tasks, while confidence is generalized to the person’s personality as a whole.

Bandura (1994) asserted there are four main sources of influence for self-efficacy: mastery experiences, social models, social persuasion, and somatic and emotional states. When people are faced with tough circumstances and doubts arise, their sense of efficacy contributes to the outcome of the situation. Individuals with low sense of efficacy avoid tasks they perceive as difficult, while individuals with strong sense of efficacy approach difficult tasks challenges to be tackled rather than avoided (Bandura, 1993).

Since Bandura’s (1977) original work on self-efficacy theory was published, there have been many studies that have dabbled in the psychology of confidence. In one particular study of interest, Carney et al. (2010) asserted that simply engaging in high-power poses can increase a person’s feeling of power and confidence, thereby making the person more successful when facing stressful tasks (e.g., job interviews, public speaking, disagreeing with a boss, taking risks). Although not specifically stated in the research, Carney et al. seem to have based their work at least partially in self-efficacy theory. Their



study looks at a person's increased feeling of power and willingness to participate in a gambling bet. This specific task-focused approach follows Bandura's (1994) definition of perceived self-efficacy.

Currently, some research has explored the connection between personality and interpreting. However, there is a lack of research that studies confidence and self-efficacy in interpreters. I am hoping that the present research can be a starting point for other researchers looking to study self-esteem and self-efficacy in the field of interpreting.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Competence** is “the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill, or strength” to complete a task or duty (“Competence,” n. d.).

**Confidence** is “the faith or belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way” (“Confidence,” n.d.). It is closely related to self-esteem and self-efficacy.

**Self-efficacy** “reflects a belief about one's abilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to perform a particular task (specific self-efficacy) or tasks in general (generalized self-efficacy)” (Gardner & Pierce, 1998, p. 51). It is important to emphasize that “*self-efficacy* as a judgment of personal capability is not *self-esteem*, which is a judgement of self-worth” (Bandura, 2005, p. 26).

**Self-esteem** is “defined by how much value people place on themselves. It is the evaluative component of self- knowledge. High self-esteem refers to a highly favorable global evaluation of the self. Low self-esteem, by definition, refers to an unfavorable definition of the self” (Baumeister et al., 2003, p. 2).

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The present study focuses on the need to cultivate confidence in interpreter students and novice interpreters. The goal is to identify current self-esteem and self-efficacy levels of interpreter students/novice interpreters and analyze reasons for lack of confidence. The literature review will begin by showing the link between personality and job performance. I will then explain how personality plays a role in predicting interpreter success. This research led me to realize the importance of self-esteem and self-efficacy for prospective interpreters. The next section will explain how self-esteem and self-efficacy are related to confidence. These constructs will be measured in the present study using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (Chen et al., 2001). The review of the literature will defend how self-esteem and self-efficacy constructs can have either a negative or positive impact on job performance of practice professionals, including that of interpreters. The final section will discuss the need for developing coping mechanisms and cultivating confidence in interpreters. I will introduce the high-power pose (Carney et al., 2010) as a possible technique that can be implemented in stressful interpreting scenarios.

### **Personality and Job Performance**

There has been a plethora of research done in the field of psychology concerning personality and job performance. Schwenke (2015) stated that “personality differences explain why some individuals thrive in challenging work environments when others find the same situation overwhelming” (p. 127). The majority of studies concerning the relationship between personality and job performance conducted from the early 1900s to

the mid-1980s concluded “that personality and job performance were not related in any meaningful way across traits and across situations” (Barrick et al., 2001, p. 9). However, as constructs to measure personality improved with the innovation of inventories such as the Five Factor Model (FFM)—also referred to as the “Big Five”—it seems that at least some aspects of personality are related to performance (Barrick et al., 2001). Judge and Bono (2001) found that four specific traits—self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (neuroticism)—aid in predictability of job satisfaction and job performance.

One of the main reasons that psychologists are so concerned with this phenomenon is because a person’s personality can predict and explain their behavior at work (Barrick, 2005). This suggests that some personality traits determine whether people are hired for and succeed in different jobs. At a young age, Americans are taught that there is a certain way to behave in order for employers to take a second look at job candidates. However, as the field of psychology continues to develop ways of assessing personality constructs, it has become more evident that personality traits such as dependability, persistency, confidence, and organization tend to be positively related to performance at work (Barrick, 2005).

Although there is still debate as to whether perfectionism is an actual personality trait or not, its implications for job performance and psychological well-being are not to be ignored. Schwenke (2015) asserted that “while some researchers conceptualize perfectionism as a negative and problematic personality trait, other researchers acknowledge the potential advantages of perfectionism” (p. 129). How people cope with perfectionism can have an impact on their psychological health, which can lead to

differences in job performance. O'Connor and O'Connor (2003) indicated that “components of perfectionism and specific types of coping predict hopelessness and psychological distress prospectively and beyond that explained by initial levels of distress” (p. 370).

Distinguishing the root causes and types of perfectionism a person may display is important. Hewitt and Flett (2007) described self-oriented perfectionism as a need for the self to be perfect. On the other hand, socially prescribed perfectionism is demonstrated when a person feels they must be perfect for the benefit of others. The difference between these two types of perfectionism can have varied effects on a person's job outlook. A study conducted by Speirs Neumeister (2004) aimed to distinguish between socially prescribed and self-oriented perfectionists. The participants of this study were required to discuss their successes and failures. Many of the participants had a tendency to minimize their successes while maximizing their failures, a common feature of perfectionists. One difference that stood out between socially prescribed and self-oriented perfectionists was that self-oriented perfectionists often attributed their failures to internal causes, while socially prescribed perfectionists attributed their failures to more situational factors. Speirs Neumeister (2004) pointed out that “perfectionistic students could benefit from learning how to make appropriate attributions for failure” (p. 331). Many times, self-worth or esteem is equated with performance, and this is a negative aspect of perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 2007). It is unrealistic for a person to perform perfectly at all times, and this self-given expectation can be detrimental to the job performance of a person in any profession. Barrick (2005) suggested that looking at personality in relation

to on-job analytic data may not be enough. Instead, researchers should take into account the effects that specific situations can have on behavior.

### **Personality in Interpreting and Translation**

In the profession of interpreting, according to Schwenke (2015), an overwhelming desire to perform perfectly can lead to job burnout. An important factor to consider is whether a person's level of perfectionism is adaptive or maladaptive, because, either way, the perfectionist trait will influence interpreting—either positively or negatively. Interpreters who exhibit maladaptive perfectionistic traits tend to “develop patterns of judging their performance as inadequate and are self-critical of their job performance, which produces, exaggerates, or prolongs stress responses” (Schwenke, 2015, p. 134).

A nagging issue in the interpreter education community is distinguishing which students are a good fit for interpreter training/education programs. In a study that researched the most important skill and personality attributes of students from the perspective of both students and faculty, Shaw and Hughes (2006) found that the students and faculty agreed that the four most important academic items were self-regulation, involvement in the non-native language community, competency in the native language, and a desire to learn. In addition, both the students and faculty identified confidence as playing “an extremely important role in learning to interpret” and as a personality characteristic needing to be developed (Shaw & Hughes, 2006, p. 213). Shaw and Hughes (2006) also noticed that students experienced high levels of frustration and insecurity in the classroom, probably due to personality. A similar study that researched both an American Sign Language interpreting program and a spoken language interpreting program in Austria also found that students placed high value on the

necessity of confidence as a personality trait, “especially as they moved from language learning to interpretation learning” (Shaw et al., 2004, p. 83). It can be implied from these studies that greater care must be taken when attempting to build the confidence of interpreting students. There is currently a lack of tangible resources for aiding new interpreters in acquiring higher levels of confidence in interpreting.

Bontempo et al. (2014) were the first to conduct research regarding the relationship between personality and interpreting on a global scale. This study investigated the effects of personality attributes of interpreters on the interpreter’s aptitude for success using interpreter responses from 38 different countries. According to Bontempo et al. (2014), “dispositional feelings of self-worth impact on perceived interpreter competence, and that perceived level of competence correlates with actual level of interpreter accreditation” (p. 38). Akbari and Segers (2017) studied the relationship between personality traits and translation texts from English to Persian. This study, which used a personality scale similar to the one used by Bontempo et al. (2014), found that personality did seem to impact the translation quality of participants. Participants whose dominant trait was neuroticism “often exhibited stress and anxiety, fear of failure, and passiveness in the course of their translations resulting in low quality translations” (Akbari & Segers, 2017, p. 260). It was also noted that neurotic participants were more likely to exhibit low confidence, frustration, and indecision (Akbari & Segers, 2017). Personality is important to consider and understand when constructing interpreter education programs. If students do not have a sufficient level of self-worth and confidence, it is likely that they will find success a challenging feat. Therefore, studying personality alone as a predictor for interpreter success is not enough. In different

situations, despite typical personalities, interpreters may react by demonstrating reduced or diminished confidence. Thus, a study that considers the relationship between confidence and interpreter success is necessary.

Interpreters typically work between their native language and a foreign language. Learning a new language can be overwhelming to anyone, but having to interpret between a native and non-native language can lead to high levels of language anxiety. As with general perfectionism, language anxiety can be seen as either positive or negative, depending on the situation and the person. Rosiers et al. (2011) indicated that language anxiety can either give a person an incentive to act or impair their cognitive function to the point that they are unable to perform adequately. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) found that when performing a task involving the non-native language, a person typically had more anxiety. This anxiety can lead to an unhealthy amount of stress and self-criticism.

### **Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy**

The present study focuses heavily on self-esteem and self-efficacy levels. Although similar, there are distinct differences in these self-evaluations. Identifying and analyzing both constructs could prove to be useful in research (Chen et al., 2004).

#### ***Self-Esteem***

When discussing self-esteem, it is common to refer to a person as having either high or low self-esteem. These constructs refer to a person's positive or negative feelings toward themselves (Ferris et al., 2010). The idea that high self-esteem is a highly desirable trait and necessary for all positive outcomes has come to permeate North American culture. Alternatively, low self-esteem is seen as a primary cause for many

individual's problems (Baumeister et al., 2003). People with high self-esteem often have an advantage in conditions that lead to stress or the possibility of failure. Baumeister et al. (2003) asserted that "high self-esteem has value in causing people to persist longer in the face of failure" (p. 15). Conversely, people with low self-esteem are less capable of using self-regulation strategies and do not bounce back from failures as quickly as people with high self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 2003).

It is important to realize the distinction between global self-esteem and specific self-esteem. Global self-esteem "tends to be associated with overall psychological well-being," while specific self-esteem "tends to be more strongly associated with behavior or behavioral outcomes" (Rosenberg et al., 1995, p. 153). This means that specific self-esteem has a greater impact on task performance than global self-esteem. Ferris et al. (2010) argued that "although we may encounter successes and failures in many different domains during our lifetime, it is likely that only a small subset of these outcomes will have the ability to influence how we feel about ourselves" (p. 565). This suggests that the impact on self-esteem depends on the domains about which a person cares deeply and within which they are strongly motivated to succeed. Research suggests that higher specific self-esteem has more of an impact on job performance than global self-esteem (Ferris et al., 2010; Rosenberg et al., 1995).

### ***Self-Efficacy***

Similar to self-esteem, when referring to self-efficacy, people are often referred to as having either high or low self-efficacy. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to believe they have the ability to change the outcome of negative events, whereas individuals with low self-efficacy typically believe they have no input on negative events



(Judge et al., 1998). Research shows a correlation between self-efficacy and task performance (Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990; Rezaei, 2012). Even when a person is seemingly capable and competent enough to perform a task, their personal judgment of their self-efficacy can have an impact on their actual ability to successfully complete said task (Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990). Bouffard-Bouchard (1990) claimed that self-efficacy judgments are dependent upon context, and perceived self-efficacy is related to feedback received after completing a specific task.

Judge et al. (1998) emphasized the importance of a positive mindset as a predictor for successful job performance. Individuals with high self-efficacy are prone to having “a more ‘optimistic’ evaluation style than those with low self-efficacy” (p. 175). This suggests that, for some jobs, people with higher self-efficacy have higher levels of job performance (Judge et al., 1998).

### ***The Crossroads of Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy***

It is commonly believed that individuals who possess “a strong sense of self are more highly motivated, higher achievers, more resourceful, and ... are more resilient in the face of adversity than those individuals who have a weak self-concept” (Gardner & Pierce, 1998, p. 48). Both self-esteem and self-efficacy are evaluations of the self that seem to have an impact on multiple facets of an individual’s life. Research has linked self-esteem and self-efficacy levels to performance in various domains, including academics, career, and even family life (Deuling & Burns, 2017; Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Lane et al., 2004). Judge et al. (1998) asserted that “generalized self-efficacy is likely to be related to self-esteem because it encompasses individuals’ judgments of their capabilities to handle events in their lives” (p. 170). Therefore, combining these two

constructs while conducting research gives the possibility of yielding a better prediction of overall job performance (Chen et al., 2004).

Chen et al. (2004) found that, although they are similar constructs, the outcomes of self-efficacy and self-esteem level can be different. This means that the way a person judges their capability (i.e., self-efficacy) versus the way a person feels about themselves (i.e., self-esteem) can lead to separate consequences. This difference is most likely seen because self-esteem deals with feelings of the self, whereas self-efficacy deals with beliefs about one's capabilities. Rama and Sarada (2017) stated that self-esteem and self-efficacy are "directly connected with superior performance hence linked with competence of the individual" (p. 37). It is clear that there are several positive implications for individuals who have high self-esteem and self-efficacy. Gardner and Pierce (1998) went so far as to suggest that organizations should hire individuals who show high levels of these constructs because these individuals are more likely to be more motivated, resilient, and successful than those with low self-esteem and self-efficacy.

### **Confidence in Other Practice Professions**

In practice professions, including teaching, nursing, occupational therapy, and sports, there has been some research concerning the correlation between feelings of confidence and performance

#### ***Teaching***

The profession of teaching requires confidence to be able to develop. Hennessy et al. (2010) conducted a longitudinal study following and interviewing students for a three-year period after the students completed a four-year education degree and met qualifications to student teach. The researchers did not observe the student teachers at

work, but instead allowed them to reflect upon and judge their own practices. In this study, positive and/or negative experiences had a tendency to affect the students' confidence. When students had setbacks, their confidence levels were less likely to increase. Conversely, "when positive feedback was given the confidence of the student and his/her positive attitude towards the teaching subject increased dramatically" (Hennessy et al., 2010, p. 67).

Self-efficacy plays an important role in a teacher's success. Teachers who believe they are capable of teaching children to meet high standards are more likely to achieve this goal (Protheroe, 2008). Norton (2019) noted that teachers who perceive themselves as highly competent in the content knowledge tend to be more confident about their ability to teach it, which suggests that educational programs should place a greater focus on graduating confident prospective teachers.

### ***Nursing***

A significant study concerning confidence in practice professionals explored new graduate nurse confidence in interprofessional collaboration (Pfaff et al., 2014). Pfaff et al. (2014) noted that "the first year of nursing practice is challenging for many new graduate nurses, particularly as they strive to build confidence in their professional practice" (p. 2). Data were collected using mixed methods (mailed surveys and telephone interviews), and "participants reported that confidence in interprofessional collaboration increased with experience" (p. 8). Pfaff et al. (2014) also emphasized the importance of support by teams, organizations, and new graduate nurse development programs.

Greenlees-Rae (2016) found that confidence levels of new graduate nurses is constantly evolving and never static. New nurses reported that "they moved from

moments of confidence to moments of being doubtful or uncertain in practice during unpredictable or new situations” (p. 97).

Supportive environments seem to foster confidence in nurses (Evans et al., 2010; Greenlees-Rae, 2016). When new nurses feel comfortable in their environments, they have more confidence in themselves. Van Dyk et al. (2016) suggested that the development of programs to help foster confidence in novice nurses and/or nurses with low self-efficacy could prove useful. Messmer et al. (2004) saw success with an education-to-practice nurse-shadowing program that helped new ICU nurses become comfortable in their role with strategic guidance from experienced nurses. Focused programs that aim to hone specific nursing skills have had positive impacts on both competency and self-efficacy (Kim et al., 2018).

Lundberg (2008) noted that confidence is not solely learned in the classroom, but instead it is developed in hands-on settings “by mastering newly learned skills and experiencing success” (p. 86). As new graduate nurses apply their knowledge and experience positive outcomes, their sense of self improves. The development of confidence in nurses “will influence nursing practice and patient care outcomes” (Greenlees-Rae, 2016, p. 116).

### ***Occupational Therapy***

A study of undergraduate occupational therapy students was conducted in South Africa using focus groups to collect data about the sources of professional confidence. According to Holland et al. (2012), “the sources or determinants of professional confidence lie in certain personality components and the circumstances, situations, activities, events and relationships that an individual engages in” (p. 20). Students

reported there was a combination of external and internal determinants that influenced their professional confidence. Students identified several external factors impacting their levels of confidence in the field including vicarious learning, opportunity for practice, support from others, and professional identity issues. They also discussed the competence-confidence link in which “confidence, knowledge and confidence are inextricably linked to one another” (Holland et al., 2012, p. 22). This declaration is related to a similar study where researchers used focus groups to assess perceptions of students and educators in a physiotherapy program. Delaney and Bragge (2009) found that students found their levels of confidence and their ability to learn to be directly connected.

Holland et al. (2012) made an interesting observation: Students felt they needed to figure out how to become confident on their own. They believed that it was their responsibility. The students had varying methods for coping with the anxiety and stress that negatively impacted their levels of confidence including using positive self-talk, journaling, and having faith in a greater power. There was no mention of coping techniques or strategies being taught during the undergraduate program for students to utilize. Overall, Holland et al. (2012) noted that “low anxiety levels, feeling competent, and being prepared” were needed to feel confident (p. 24). Clark (2010) encouraged occupational therapists to use confidence to persistently develop skills rather than underestimating their potential, talents, and contributions to patients’ care. A sense of confidence lends to more of a likelihood for goal achievement as well as pursuit of opportunities.

## *Sports*

Sports research suggests that there is a significant relationship between self-confidence and performance (Feltz, 2007). Confidence in sports is “associated with qualities like mental toughness, poise, grit, belief, courage, and heart” (Skinner, 2013, p. 3). Athletes’ confidence levels can vary depending on their day-to-day performance and how well they overcome obstacles. For example, choking during a sport may cause a decrease in confidence level, while producing an optimal performance under stress may cause an increase in confidence level (Hanton & Connaughton, 2002; Skinner, 2013).

Koivula et al. (2002) studied athletes to evaluate the relation between various self-esteem strategies and different dimensions of perfectionism. They found that a negative pattern of perfectionism causes high anxiety and worry, while those with a positive pattern of perfectionism “seem to enjoy setting high personal standards, regarding them as challenges” (p. 873). Self-esteem and perfectionist patterns are linked. The researchers determined that “the relation between perfectionism and self-esteem may be such that some aspects of self-esteem can affect certain dimensions or perfectionism” and vice versa (p. 873).

### **Impacts on Interpreting**

Currently, Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs) focus heavily on teaching technical skills for career success, like dual language fluency and cultural competency (Cogen & Cokely, 2015). There is little research on the soft skills, such as self-efficacy and self-esteem, that could be beneficial for students to develop. Jiménez Ivars et al. (2014) noted that “skill comes first but can be improved when it is associated with specific self-efficacy” (p. 175). Interpreters who are competent benefit greatly from

having self-efficacy, while interpreters who lack self-efficacy experience diminished success, despite their level of competence.

Shaw et al. (2004) found confidence to be a primary personality asset for interpreting students as they dealt with the stress of rigorous programs. Students who exhibited confidence, whether they believed it pre-existed or was taught during coursework, seemed to have a greater advantage over students who did not (Shaw et al., 2004). O’Bleness (2019) suggested that focusing more on the development of interpreter self-efficacy could improve interpreter effectiveness.

Research concerning confidence in practice professionals, including interpreting students and certified interpreters, is currently sparse. Practice professionals across the board could potentially benefit from understanding coping mechanisms for developing confidence in order to improve job performance.

### **Cultivating Confidence**

Interpreters must find effective coping mechanisms to combat low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Programs should incorporate confidence-building strategies into the curriculum. Some examples could include simulations, role-playing, peer modeling, story sharing, and journaling (Lundberg, 2008).

A possible cause for interpreters’ lack of confidence is small decision latitude set forth by the standard guidelines that interpreters follow. Dean and Pollard (2001) asserted that “the decision latitude conveyed by the RID [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf] guidelines seem to leave interpreters with few options for responding to many of the demands presented in their occupation” (p. 8). Unfortunately, the lack of decision latitude leaves many interpreters feeling limited in their coping options for stressful assignments.

The use of the demand-control theory proposed by Dean and Pollard (2001) has shown to be helpful to interpreters but could possibly become even more useful when combined with other coping mechanisms for high-stress situations, such as utilizing a high-power pose before a job.

### ***Power Pose***

Although researchers have considered the theory of embodiment for quite some time now, the concept of power posing is fairly new and has become increasingly popular over the last few years. Carney et al. (2010) suggested that it is possible to embody any psychological construct, including power, with the implementation of “a signature pattern of nonverbal correlates” (p. 1367). According to Carney et al. (2010), “the two nonverbal dimensions universally linked to power: expansiveness (i.e., taking up more space or less space) and openness (i.e., keeping limbs open or closed)” (p. 1364). In one of the first studies involving the utilization of power poses (Carney et al., 2010), researchers explored how low-power poses versus high-power poses influenced a person’s willingness to take risks, feeling of power, and cortisol and testosterone levels. From the results gathered, it is believed that simply changing the way a person stands before difficult or stressful situations may improve confidence and performance.

Smith and Apicella (2016) attempted to repeat the study using a real-world situation of competition, but failed to produce similar results. According to Smith and Apicella (2016), “there is now a strong consensus in the academic community that the original power posing effects reported by Carney et al. (2010) were not real” (p. 179). Accusations have even been made that the Carney et al. (2010) experiment and replicated studies with successful results possibly reported false positives (Smith & Apicella, 2016).



Garrison et al. (2016) also attempted to replicate the findings of the original power posing research conducted by Carney et al. (2010), but they also fell short. In this new study, the researchers not only explored the effects of high- versus low-power poses, but also included dominant versus submissive eye gaze in their work. Garrison et al. (2016) sought to measure the “effects on dominance, risk taking, and subjective feelings of power” (p. 624). Their findings, in fact, were quite the opposite of the original Carney et al. (2010) study. When participants adopted high-power poses and dominant eye gazes, they reported having reduced feelings of power. Garrison et al. (2016) admitted that they did not follow the original procedure for power pose research done by Carney et al. (2010), which may have been a factor in the inability to replicate the results. It was also speculated that the lack of meaningful social context in the study could have caused the hypothesis to not be supported.

The study conducted by Carney et al. (2010) has been met with harsh criticism since publication. Other researchers have attempted to replicate the original experiment with varying results. In separate studies, researchers have dubbed the findings of Carney et al. (2010) to be caused by a phenomenon called *p*-hacking (Credé & Phillips, 2017; Simmons & Simonsohn, 2017). Credé and Phillips (2017) suggested that the cause of *p*-hacking is that “researchers have substantial decision latitude about how statistical analyses are conducted,” meaning the researchers only reported what was most favorable for the research hypothesis (p. 493). Because of this, there has been much debate about whether the Carney et al. (2010) study was botched. Credé and Phillips (2017) used a multivariate analysis and found that several factors, including identification of outliers, choice of dependent variable, and use of control variables, could have had a significant

effect on the data collected and results produced by Carney et al. (2010). Simmons and Simonsohn (2017) analyzed 24 studies and found that the findings of Carney et al. (2010) lack empirical support to show that the effects of expansive versus contractive poses are indeed real. At the time of their study, Simmons and Simonsohn (2017) concluded that the current evidence is too weak to uphold the results of the Carney et al. (2010) study as truth “to advocate for people to engage in power posing to better their lives” (pp. 4-5).

Since studies have been published essentially dubbing the power pose research conducted by Carney et al. (2010) as fraudulent, Cuddy et al. (2018) have published a rebuttal. In this new literature, Cuddy et al. (2018) asserted that the critics of the original study were not looking at the entire picture. Cuddy et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive literature review of 53 studies of power posing manipulations and found “that the postural-feedback literature contains strong evidential value” (p. 660). Cuddy et al. argued that the results and conclusions of Simmons and Simonsohn (2017) were misleading in the context of the present power pose research. Cuddy et al. (2018) encouraged researchers to continue to study the effects of power pose, because meta-analysis supports the influences of postural feedback and its effects on people’s emotional and affective states.

A common theme around power pose research thus far is its application to willingness to take risks. Although applications to confidence have been hypothesized, they have not been thoroughly studied. Despite the debates surrounding the validity of the original research posed by Carney et al. (2010), there is still evidence that “bodily movements can influence cognition, motivation and emotion” (Smith & Apicella, 2016, p. 172). Therefore, research concerning embodying confidence of interpreters by

engaging in power posing is still relevant and necessary. Instead of investigating willingness to take risks and feelings of power, a fresh perspective involving feelings of confidence and job performance is necessary.

### **Summary**

Smith and Maroney (2018) pointed out that “interpreter education has primarily focused on ASL acquisition and competence of second language users” (p. 6). This focus has omitted the importance of developing the self in conjunction with learning technical skills. Interpreting students and novice interpreters will benefit from finding and incorporating coping mechanisms to increase self-esteem and self-confidence. This will hopefully lead to greater success in interpreting, and, eventually, a smaller readiness-to-work gap. The present study analyzes how confidence relates to current self-perceived obstacles of interpreting students and novice interpreters.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The present study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the self-esteem and self-efficacy levels of interpreting students and novice interpreters?
- What impact does confidence level have on interpreting students and novice interpreters?
- Is low confidence a roadblock to success for interpreting students and novice interpreters?

With these questions in mind, I designed a two-part study. The first phase of research was conducted using an online survey. The second phase was conducted via in-person interviews. I hypothesized that there would be a relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy in prospective and novice interpreters, self-perceived competence would be linked to self-perceived confidence, and that graduates of four-year interpreting programs would perceive themselves as more competent and confident than graduates of two-year programs and students still enrolled in an ITP. I also hypothesized that the implementation of high-power poses would help improve interpreter self-perceived confidence.

### **Use of Deception**

Deception was used in the present study. Participants were told that the title of the research project was “The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters,” and that the purpose of the study was to explore

personality types of successful interpreters. This was done in an attempt to elicit truthful answers about self-confidence in participants.

Participants who were selected for an interview and interpreting sample were also told that their interpreting samples would be rated by BEI-trained raters in order to increase the feeling of importance for the sample. These participants were debriefed after they had given their interpreting sample and before the interview began. If a participant objected to the deception and wanted their data excluded, the interview portion was not completed and the interpreting samples were deleted.

### **Phase One: Online Survey**

Survey data were collected through an online survey via Google Forms. The criteria for participation in the online survey required that respondents be: (a) enrolled in an interpreter training program, (b) recently graduated from an interpreter training program (three years or less), or (c) actively pursuing interpreting certification.

### ***Participant Recruitment***

A link to the survey and an explanation of the criteria were sent to 13 known interpreter training programs in Texas to be forwarded to current/past students who fit the requirements. Recruitment was limited to Texas in order to focus on students and novice interpreters who were more likely to pursue or hold BEI Certification. This certification exam was developed by the state of Texas and differs from some other interpreting certifications used across the county. Participants agreed to participate in the survey with the knowledge that they could withdraw at any time if they did not feel comfortable continuing.

### *Survey Design*

The online survey portion of this study was administered via Google Forms (see Appendix B). Demographic data were collected from participants including state of residence, age, ethnicity, and gender. Information about educational background, current certifications, and plans for certification was also collected. The survey involved two outside scales. The first scale used was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965). The RSES consists of 10 statements ranked on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), to 4 (strongly agree). Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are reverse scored. Participants were asked to view the statements from the perspective of their feelings as an interpreter. The scores for this scale range from 10 to 40. Higher scores on the RSES indicated higher levels of self-esteem.

The second scale used was the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSES; Chen et al., 2001). The NGSES consists of eight statements ranked on a 5-point Likert scale and averaged. The scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), to 5 (strongly agree). Participants were asked to view the statements from the perspective of their feelings as an interpreter. The averaged maximum score for this scale is 5. Higher averages on this scale indicated higher levels of self-efficacy.

The survey included open-ended questions aimed at gauging participants' feelings of competence and confidence levels in interpreting. There was also a question about determining one's readiness to sit for a certification exam. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked if they would be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview and provide an interpreting sample. If participants agreed, they were asked to

provide contact information. If the participants did not want to be included in the second phase of the study, the survey ended.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Survey responses were transferred from Google Forms and placed in an Excel spreadsheet. Scores from the RSES and the NGSES were calculated and also placed in an Excel spreadsheet. Pivot tables were used to look for themes and patterns in the responses. Open-ended questions were analyzed and compared using common key words and themes that appeared from the responses.

### **Phase Two: Interviews**

The second portion of data was collected through in-person interviews with participants who had completed the online survey.

### ***Participant Recruitment***

Of the 31 respondents who participated in the online survey, 17 agreed to a face-to-face interview. Before providing contact information, participants were reminded that agreeing to an interview would make their survey data identifiable and therefore no longer anonymous. For convenience, only participants in or near the Houston area were considered for the in-person interview. I placed the nine participant numbers in an online randomizer, and invited the first six participants chosen to take part in the interview via email.

### ***Interview Design***

I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview in order to allow for some flexibility in participant responses and discussion (Hale & Napier, 2014). I loosely

followed a script to guide the interview appointment toward the goal in a timely manner (see Appendix F).

When participants arrived for their interview appointment, I reviewed the consent form with them and had them sign a hard copy. At this point, the research was still under the guise of an investigation of only personality in novice interpreters. I then introduced the first video (Marcil, 2018) that participants would interpret, reminding them that it would be rated by BEI-trained raters to add to the stress effect. I stepped out of the room while interpretation samples were given. After the participant finished this first interpreting sample, I asked a few questions to gauge their feelings toward their performance.

I then showed participants a short video describing the use and benefits of power poses (Robbins, 2017). Once participants had seen this, I introduced the video for their second interpreting sample (Salvador, 2018). Before the subject interpreted the video, I asked them to choose one of five high-power poses (see Figure 12) to hold for one minute. I then reminded the participant that their interpretation would be rated and stepped out of the room while they worked. Once the interpreting sample was complete, I asked the participant the same questions to gauge their feelings toward their performance. This concluded the interpreting portion of the interview.

Following the interpretations, I informed the participants of my use of deception. I explained that the true purpose of the study was to investigate self-confidence and its impacts on interpreting. I also told them that their interpretations would not be rated at all. Participants were then given the option to sign a debriefing consent form and continue with the interview. All participants agreed to continue.



For the remainder of the interview, I asked questions aimed at assessing participants' current relationship with self-confidence and ways they handle stressful interpreting scenarios. I also discussed some of the open-ended survey responses the participants had given and asked them to expand upon them. At the end of the interview, I explained the difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem and gave interviewees their scores from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (Chen et al., 2001). I asked the participants whether their results were expected based on their feelings toward themselves. I also inquired how the participants felt self-esteem and self-efficacy impacted their interpreting performance. This concluded the interview.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The responses to each question were analyzed, and key words were highlighted to find common themes among the responses. The provided interpreting samples were not evaluated.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The focus for the present study was on interpreters seeking to obtain or holding BEI certifications. Therefore, invitations to participate were only sent to interpreter training programs within the state of Texas. Although this decision limited the participant sample size, it also allowed for the study to be more geared towards interpreting students/novice interpreters whose goal was to pass the BEI Certification exam.

I relied on interpreting programs to forward the invitation to participate to current and former students. There may have been a larger number of respondents if the invitation had been posted on interpreting related social media groups. However, I limited

my recruitment in this way to weed out potential participants who did not fit the criteria and/or were not located in Texas.

It is also important to mention that the survey portion relied on participants to be forthcoming with their feelings. The self-reporting nature of an online survey does not allow for checking answers for accuracy and validity.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Phase One: Survey Results**

There were 32 respondents to the online survey portion of the present study. After eliminating participants who did not qualify for the study, 31 responses were analyzed.

#### ***Participant Demographics***

All participants resided in the state of Texas. Only participants in Texas were used because the state of Texas developed and offers the BEI Certification exam for interpreters, which differs from the certification exam(s) created for and used at the national level. Of the 31 participants in the survey sample, 90.3% were female and 9.7% were male. Of the participants, 48.4% were White, 25.8% were Hispanic or Latino, 22.6% were Black or African American, and 3.2% were Asian/Pacific Islander. The age ranges were as follows: 54.8% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 24, 29% were between the ages of 25 and 34, 6.5% were between the ages of 34 and 44, 6.5% were between the ages of 45 and 54, and 3.2% were between the ages of 55 and 64.

#### ***Educational Background***

The participants had a wide variety of educational backgrounds: 25.8% reported they held a high school diploma, 32.26% held an Associate degree, 29.03% held a bachelor's degree, 6.45% held a master's degree, 3.23% held a doctoral degree. One participant (3.23%) did not answer this question.

The majority of participants (54.84%) learned ASL during college; 22.58% learned the language during high school; 6.5% were children of Deaf adults (CODA) and were first-language learners of ASL (see Figure 1).

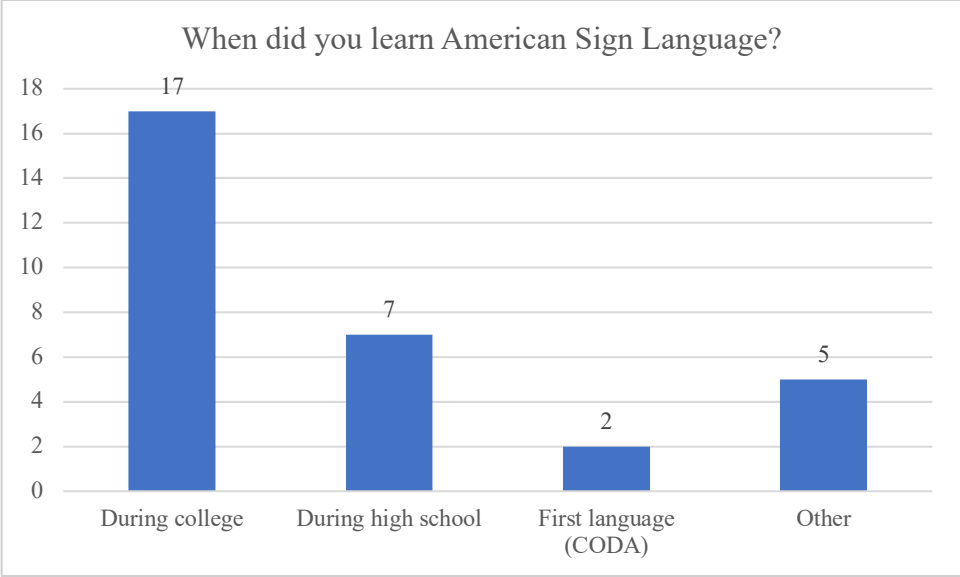


Figure 1. *ASL Learning*

Figure 2 shows that of the 31 participants, 16 (51.61%) reported current enrollment in an ITP. The other 15 participants (48.39%) had graduated from an ITP. Of the participants, 29.03% had graduated from a two-year interpreting program while 19.35% of participants had graduated from a four-year interpreting program.

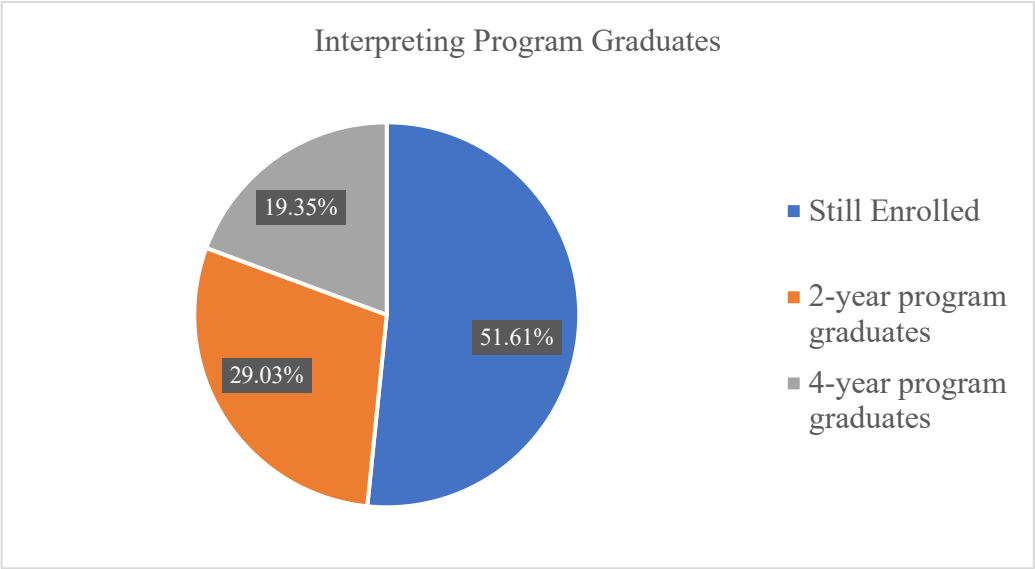


Figure 2. *Interpreting Program Graduates*

### ***Testing and Certification***

In the state of Texas, interpreters are required to take and pass the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) before they are eligible to sit for the BEI Basic performance exam. More than two-thirds (64.5%) of survey participants had taken and passed the TEP. 22.6% of participants had taken the exam, but did not pass. Among participants, 6.5% had not yet taken the TEP, but planned to do so in the future; 3.2% of participants did not plan on taking the TEP. Of the participants, 3.2% had taken the exam, but were awaiting results at the time of responding to the online survey.

Participants were asked how many times they attempted the TEP before receiving passing results (see Figure 3). Nearly half (48.4%) of the participants passed their TEP on the first try. For 6.5% of the participants, they passed after two attempts; 3.2% passed after three attempts; 3.2% passed after four attempts; and 3.2% passed after five or more attempts. Among those completing the survey, 35.5% of participants had not passed the TEP meaning they either had not taken the exam, taken the exam but not passed, or were still awaiting results.

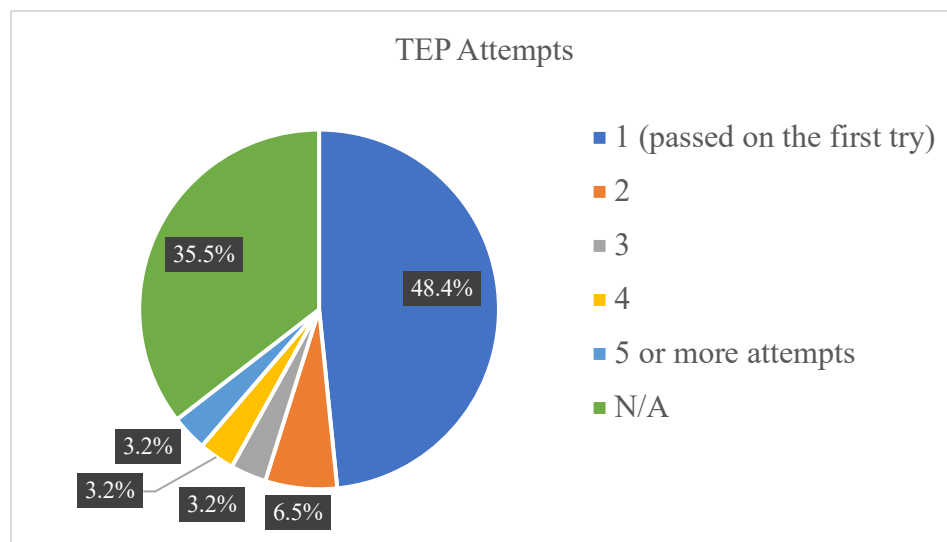


Figure 3. *TEP Attempts*

The majority of participants (61.3%) had not taken the BEI Basic performance exam but planned to in the future; 19.4% of participants had taken it and passed; 16.1% of participants had taken it but did not pass; 3.2% of participants did not plan on taking the BEI Basic performance exam.

Participants were asked how many times they attempted the BEI performance exam before receiving passing results (see Figure 4). Of the survey participants, 16.1% passed the performance exam on the first attempt, 3.2% passed after two attempts, and 3.2% passed after three attempts. There were 77.4% of participants who had not passed the BEI performance exam, meaning they either had not taken the exam, taken the exam but not passed, or were still awaiting results.

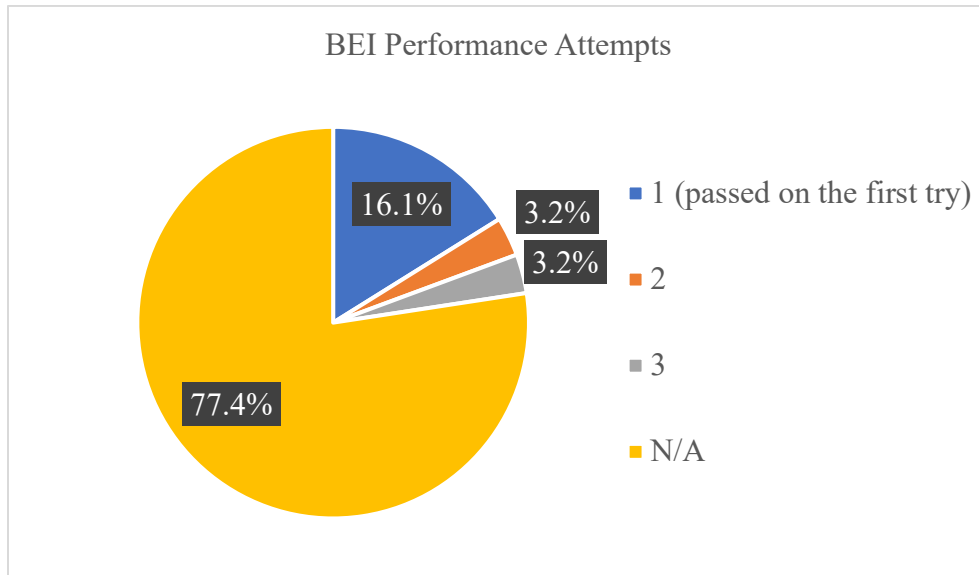


Figure 4. *BEI Performance Attempts*

Of the six participants (19.4%) who had passed the BEI Basic performance exam, five held Basic level certification and one held Advanced level certification at the time of their survey response.

### ***Confidence Scales***

Participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSES). Scores were calculated following the guidelines of each scale. The maximum possible score for the RSES is a 40, and the maximum possible score for the NGSES is a 5. The average score on the RSES was 28.81, with the maximum score reported being 38 and the minimum score reported being 16. The average score on the NGSES was 4.07, with the maximum score reported being 5 and the minimum score reported being 2.25. Table 1 displays the average self-esteem and self-efficacy scores based on graduation status of participants. Participants who were still enrolled in an ITP or had graduated from a two-year interpreting program had higher scores, on average, than participants who had graduated from a four-year interpreting program.

Table 1

*Average RSES and NGSES Scores and Graduation Status*

<b><u>Graduation Status</u></b>	<b><u>Average of Self-Esteem</u></b>	<b><u>Average of Self-Efficacy</u></b>
Still Enrolled	29.88	4.11
2-year program graduates	29.44	4.18
4-year program graduates	24.83	3.79
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>28.81</b>	<b>4.07</b>

Figure 5 shows the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem based on participant scores. There is a significant strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem of interpreter students and novice interpreters,  $r(29) = .71, p < .001$ .

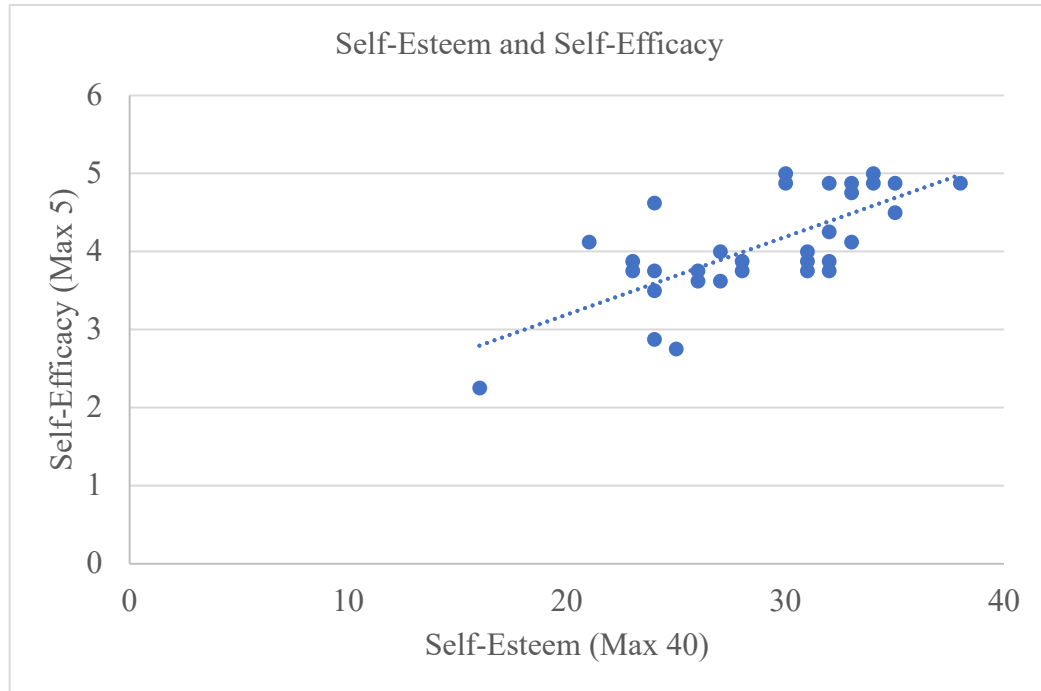


Figure 5. *Comparison of participant self-efficacy and self-esteem*

On average, female participants had higher self-esteem and self-efficacy levels than male participants. There was an 8.24 point difference in the average self-esteem and a 0.64 point difference in average self-efficacy (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Confidence Scales by Gender*

<b><u>Gender</u></b>	<b><u>Average Self-Esteem (Max 40)</u></b>	<b><u>Average Self-Efficacy (Max 5)</u></b>
Female	29.57	4.10
Male	21.33	3.46
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>28.77</b>	<b>4.04</b>

Participants who were Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino had higher scores on average than participants who were White and Asian/Pacific Islander. Note that there was only one participant who identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, therefore the group average is actually just one person's scores (see Table 3).



Table 3

*Confidence Scales by Ethnicity*

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Average Self-Esteem</u>	<u>Average Self-Efficacy</u>
Black or African American	31.29	4.27
Hispanic or Latino	28.50	4.16
White	28.00	3.96
Asian / Pacific Islander	25.00	2.75
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>28.77</b>	<b>4.04</b>

***Self-Perceived Competence***

Participants were asked whether they felt that they were a competent interpreter. The majority of respondents (74.2%) reported feeling competent sometimes. Of the respondents, 22.6% reported they did feel like they were competent interpreters, while 3.2% did not. Figure 6 shows the self-perceived competence of participants separated by graduation status.

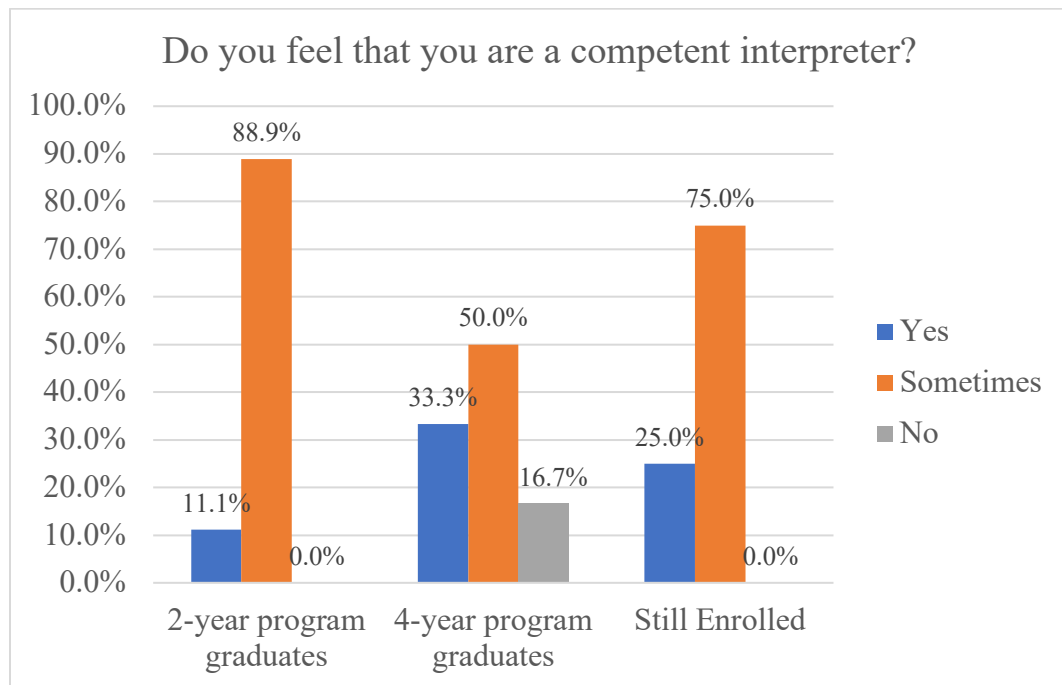


Figure 6. *Self-Perceived Competence*

Participants were asked to describe why they did or did not feel they were competent interpreters. Many participants seemed to base their responses on either mistakes they have made or good experiences they have had. I coded responses as being either positive, neutral, or negative regarding the participants' outlook of their self-perceived competence.

There were 13 participants whose responses were coded as having a positive outlook. These participants were optimistic about their skill level and believed they would continue to improve. One participant wrote, "I am the preferred interpreter for some consumers at my work place. I try my best, and take great pride in my work." Several participants mentioned that they were still learning. One participant stated that, "There is still much to learn about myself and the field of interpreting that I feel will come over time, effort, and experience."

There were also 13 participants who had neutral responses toward their current competence as an interpreter. One participant stated, "I have good days and bad days." Another participant said, "Sometimes things go well, sometimes they do not." These participants did not seem overly positive nor negative about their feelings concerning themselves as competent interpreters.

Five participants seemed to be negative in their reasoning for not perceiving themselves as competent interpreters. One participant stated, "I feel that I lack the experience required to be a competent interpreter. Furthermore, I feel that it is hard to get practice at interpreting after graduation." Another participant said, "I feel as if my receptive is horrible and I do not convey the message correctly when interpreting for someone."

Participants were asked how they are working to improve their competence in interpreting. The themes mentioned the most were deliberate practice to improve skills, increased involvement with the Deaf community, working with mentors, attending interpreting workshops, and diversifying the type of work/assignments they accept. Other responses included developing competence through mentoring prospective interpreters, volunteering, studying English, and “eliminating extra thoughts.” Figure 7 displays the number of occurrences of each theme.

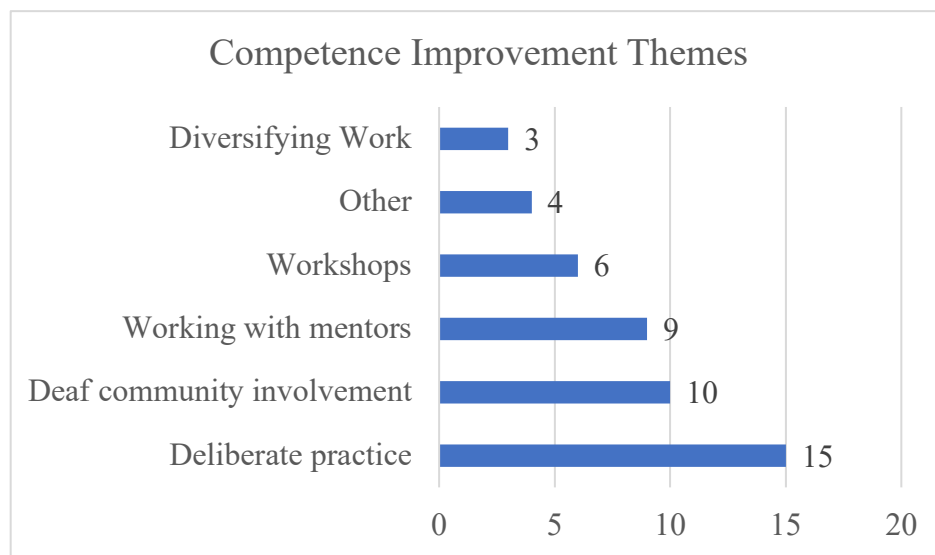


Figure 7. *Themes for Improving Competence in Interpreting*

### ***Self-Perceived Confidence***

Participants were asked whether they felt confident in their skills as an interpreter. The majority of respondents (77.4%) reported feeling confident sometimes. It was found that 16.1% of participants did feel like they were confident in their skills, while 6.5% did not. Figure 8 displays the self-perceived confidence of participants separated by graduation status.

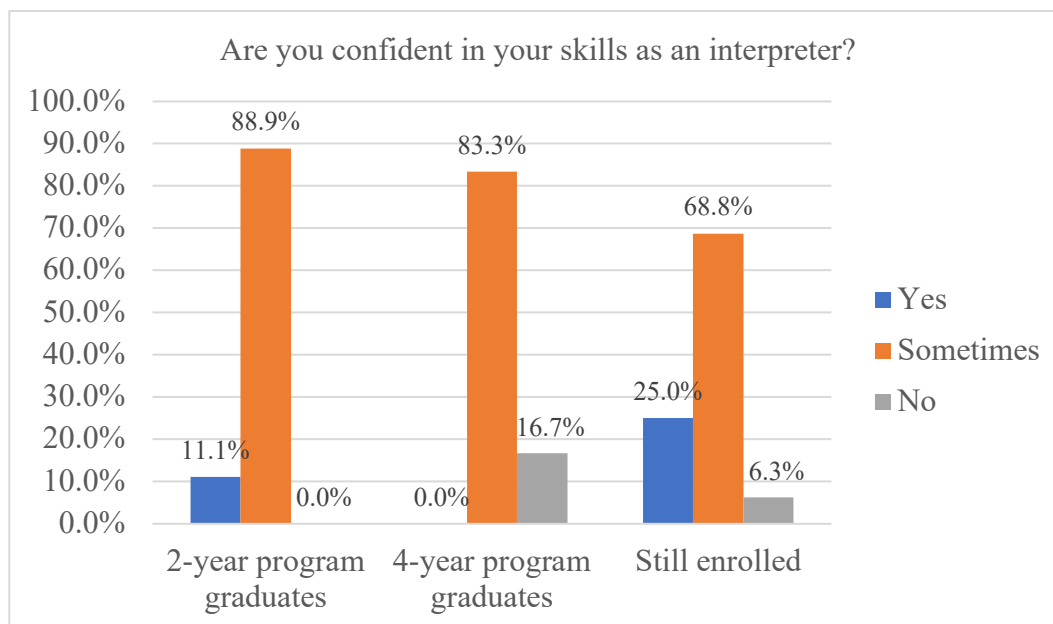


Figure 8. *Self-Perceived Confidence*

Participants described why they did or did not feel confident in their skills as interpreters. One major theme was that feeling of confidence was based on the interpreter’s self-perceived skill and experience level. Thirteen participants mentioned this issue in their open-ended responses. One participant stated, “I have not graduated from my ITP and plan on attending a university. I feel that after I have graduated, I will be a more skilled interpreter. But at the moment I do not feel like I could properly interpret for an individual.” A different participant simply stated that they “need more experience.”

Another theme was self-doubt. There were five mentions of this in the participant responses. One participant wrote, “Sometimes I forget to trust what I know.” Another participant indicated, “I feel I’m not good enough.”

Comparison to others was also a theme in participant responses. Four responses suggested that participant’s feeling of confidence was related to how they compared themselves to others. One participant said, “It feel someday I am no good compared to

others.” A different participant wrote, “I do feel intimidated and less skilled when around interpreters that are seasoned or have higher certifications.”

Some other themes that came up in the responses of this question were positivity about the work, content dependent confidence, and confidence based on mistakes made (see Figure 9).

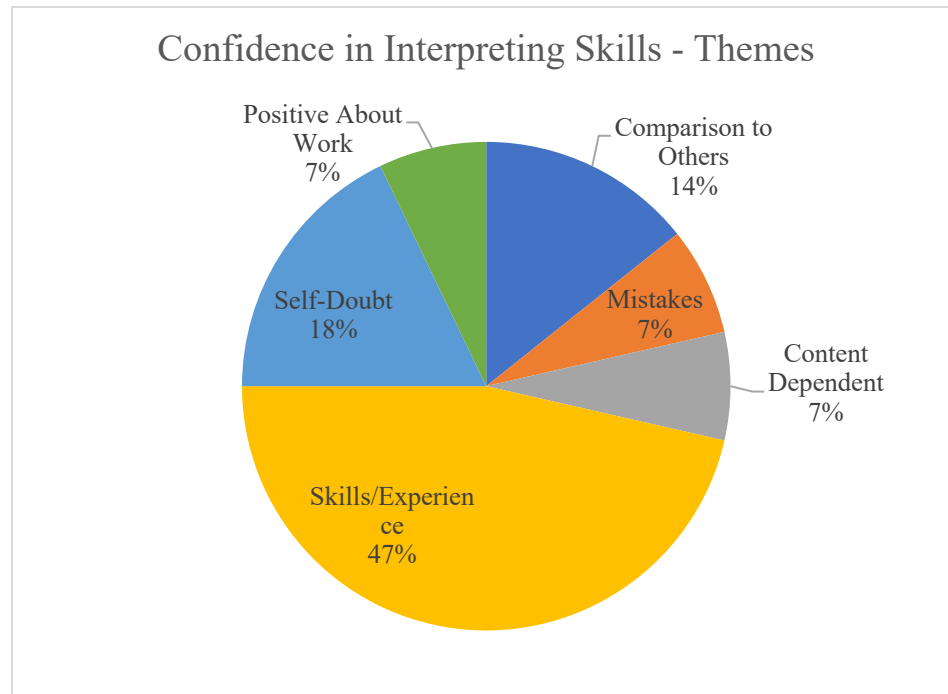


Figure 9. *Themes of Confidence in Interpreting Skills*

Participants were asked to describe what, if anything, they were doing to improve their confidence in interpreting. The top theme in the responses was skills improvement. Participants noted they were engaging in deliberate practice and attending workshops to develop their skills and aid in confidence building. Several responses also noted the utilization of positive self-talk and reflection as means for improving confidence in interpreting. One participant wrote, “Before I start my assignment, I remind myself that I am skilled enough to be here and novice enough to learn something new to improve

myself, the success of my interpretation, and the field of interpreting.” Figure 10 shows the multiple themes that appeared in the responses to this question.

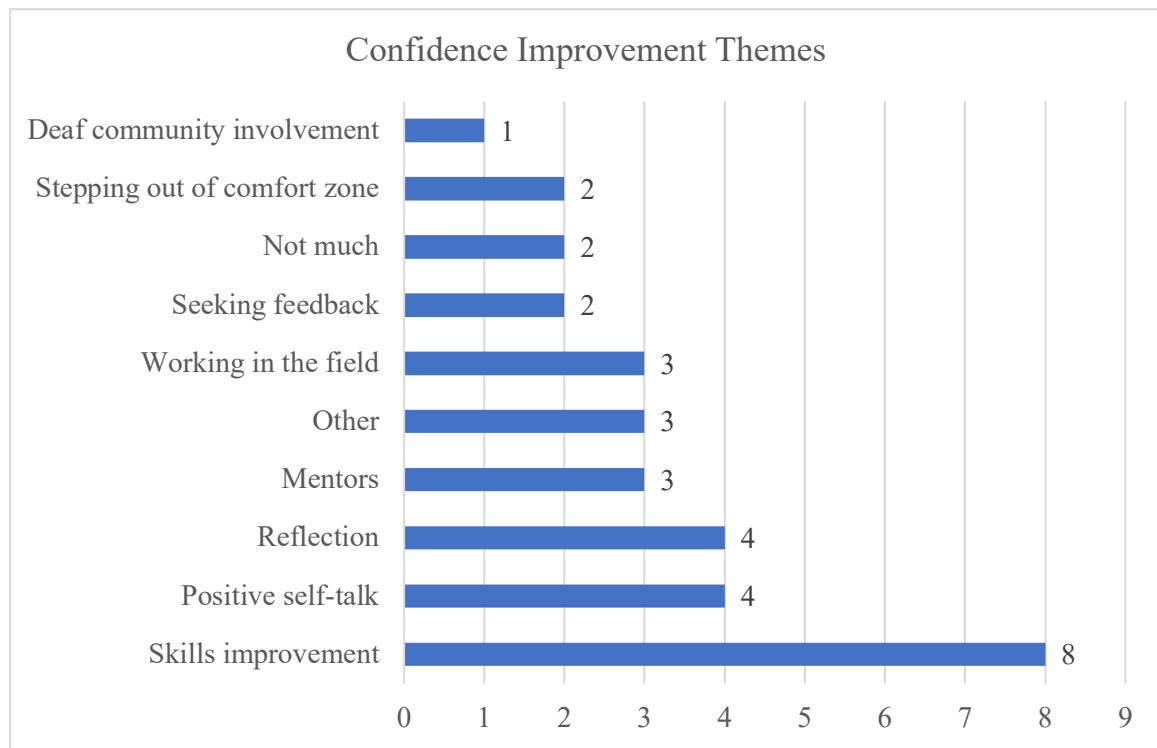


Figure 10. *Themes for Improving Confidence in Interpreting*

### ***Roadblock to Success***

The survey asked participants to explain what they feel has been the main roadblock to their success in the field of interpreting. One of the main themes that appeared in the responses to this question was insecurity/lack of confidence. One participant wrote, “I am a very anxious person and in the past that has altered my ability to learn and perform.” Another participant said that “patience, lack of confidence and over analyzation” had been obstacles in their success.

Another repeated theme was issues with testing and obtaining certification. One participant admitted, “The biggest roadblock I have faced in my journey was the Test of English Proficiency. I thought I would never get past it and have the opportunity to take

my performance test.” A different participant wrote, “The BEI is extremely hard and work as an uncertified interpreter is hard to come by.”

Many responses cited a lack of time and money as being their main barriers to success. Other themes that came up in the responses to this question include lack of skill, lack of experience, and lack of available mentors. Figure 11 displays the occurrences of each theme.

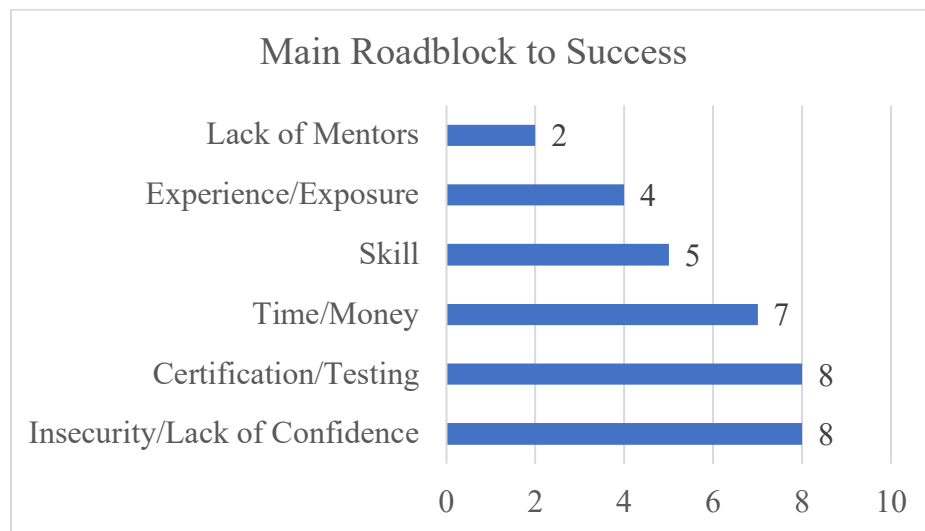


Figure 11. *Themes of the Main Roadblock to Success for Interpreters*

### **Phase Two: Interview Results**

After collecting survey responses, willing participants in or near the Houston area were randomly selected to participate in the interview phase of this study. Five interviews were conducted.

#### ***Interview Participant Demographics and Education***

Demographic information of each participant was extracted from the online survey in the first phase of the study. Of the five interviewees, four were female and one was male. Two interviewees were White, one was Hispanic or Latino, and two were

Black or African American. Three of the interviewees were between the ages of 18 and 24 and two were between the ages of 25 and 34.

At the time of the interview, one interviewee was enrolled in a two-year interpreting program, one was enrolled in a four-year ASL program, and three had graduated from a four-year interpreting program. There was approximately five months between the completion of the survey and the interviews. Participant 4 was not certified when they took the survey, but had passed the BEI Basic performance exam before the interview was conducted. Table 4 displays demographic information about interview participants.

Table 4

*Interview Participant Demographics*

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>ASL Exposure</u>	<u>ITP</u>	<u>BEI Certification</u>
1	25–34	Hispanic or Latino	Female	First language (CODA)	4-year program graduate	Basic
2	25–34	Black or African American	Female	During college	4-year program	Basic
3	18–24	Black or African American	Female	During high school	Enrolled in 4-year program	N/A
4	18–24	White	Male	During college	4-year program graduate	Basic*
5	18–24	White	Female	During high school	Enrolled in 2-year program	N/A

***Power Pose***

Each participant provided two interpreting samples. Before interpreting the second source, participants were given a brief explanation of the use of high-power poses. I asked participants to choose from five poses and hold the pose for one minute. All five participants chose to implement power pose #5 (see Figure 12).





Figure 12. *High-Power Pose Options Adapted from Screenshots of Cuddy (2012)*

After completing the second interpretation, participants were asked how they felt about their interpretations. Three participants reported feeling better about their second interpretation than their first one. One participant said they felt the same as they did with the first sample. One participant described feeling worse about their second interpretation than the first one. Participant 1 noted that practicing the power pose helped them feel more positive about preparing to interpret. Participant 4 stated that, in the beginning, they felt silly holding the power pose, but noticed that it made them feel less stressed as the time passed.

Four of the five interviewees had at least minimal knowledge of the concept of high-power poses. Three of these participants had been told about the possible benefits of power poses during college courses. The other participant had come across power poses during their own self-improvement research.

### ***Interpreting for Live Consumer versus Video***

The BEI performance exam uses pre-recorded video stimulus to test prospective interpreters. Participants were asked whether they preferred interpreting for live consumers or for video stimulus. Three interviewees expressed that they preferred interpreting for a live consumer, one preferred interpreting for a pre-recorded video, and

one had no preference (see Figure 13). All five participants mentioned some benefits of interpreting for a live consumer. One benefit mentioned by four of the participants is the opportunity for reciprocal feedback from the consumer. This helps the interpreter monitor their interpreting output and make adjustments as needed, based on the facial cues given by the consumer. Multiple participants also mentioned that interpreting with live consumers allows them to pause the interpretation for clarification or ask the source language user to repeat themselves, whereas pre-recorded videos do not allow for this type of interaction.

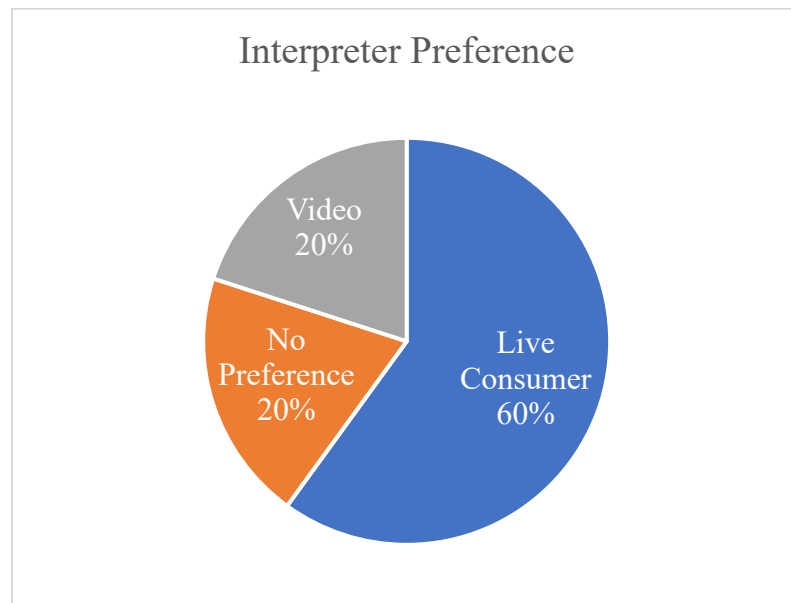


Figure 13. *Interpreter Stimulus Preference*

The one participant who preferred video stimulus over live consumers reasoned that this preference was because video stimulus is what they have had the most exposure to and become comfortable with in their ITP. This participant spoke positively of the experiences they have had interpreting for live consumers.

### *Interpreting Anxiety*

Several themes came up when participants were asked what gave them anxiety about interpreting in general (see Figure 14). The two main concerns were being judged and consumers missing out on information. Participant 5 specifically mentioned having anxiety about other interpreters watching and judging their interpreting, while Participant 2 and Participant 4 had anxiety about being judged in general. Participants also expressed their anxiety about consumers missing important information because their interpreting performance is not up to par.

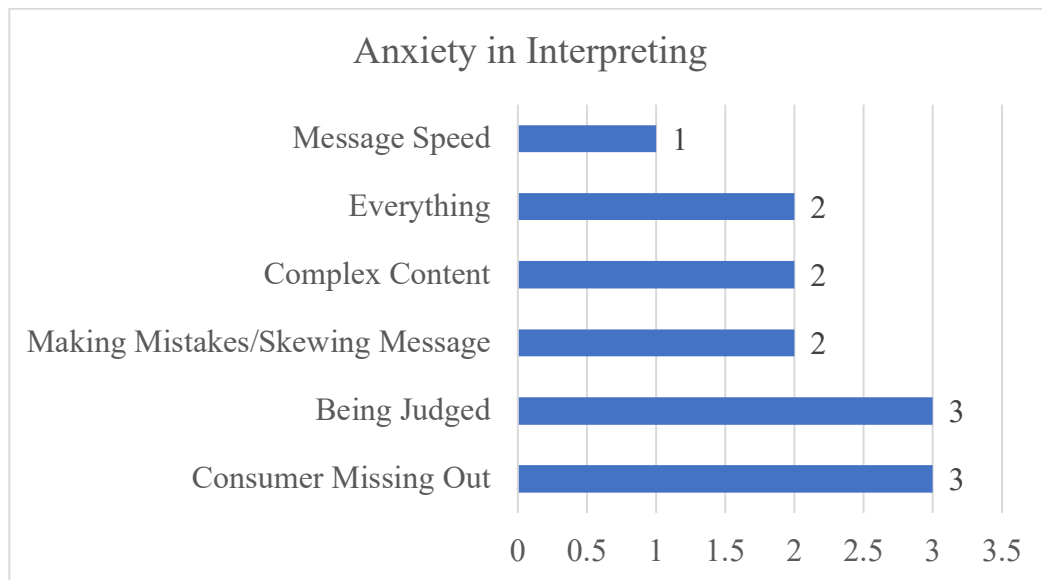


Figure 14. *Reasons for Anxiety in Interpreting*

Participant answers varied when asked what their biggest fears were concerning interpreting. Participant 1 stated that they feared obtaining a negative reputation in the Deaf/interpreting community. They mentioned a stigma of laziness that is sometimes given to children of Deaf Adults (CODAs). Participants 2 and 3 both feared placement in interpreting situations they were not qualified for. They both feared that their lack of competence would have a negative impact on the consumer. Participant 4 reported that

their biggest fear was the client missing information as a direct cause of the interpreter's lack of skill. Participant 5 noted that their biggest fear was interpreting for a "Deaf Plus" consumer and making mistakes that causes a complete breakdown of communication between both parties. Cogen and Cokely (2015) described "Deaf Plus" as individuals who are "d/Deaf or hard of hearing in addition to having significant medical, physical, emotional, cognitive, educational, or social challenges" (p. 7).

When asked about anxiety related specifically to the BEI Performance exam, the theme that appeared most was the testing time crunch. Three participants mentioned that the time limits associated with taking the test made them nervous. Two responses expressed anxiety from an inability to pause the test for clarity. Participants explained that, unlike with interpreting for a live consumer, they are unable to clarify for understanding with the pre-recorded stimulus used for the BEI Performance exam. Two responses also expressed anxiety caused by a fear of failing the exam. Other anxieties included the fear of other's perceptions if the interpreter failed the exam and anxiety about finding the testing center on time for the exam.

### ***Coping Mechanisms***

The participants were asked to describe a time they did not feel good enough to be an interpreter. Three of the five interviewees told stories of times they had to interpret sign-to-voice and struggled with unfamiliar territory. One participant recalled a time they interpreted with an unsupportive team and noticed the consumer making negative comments about the interpreter's skill level. One participant did not feel capable when they observed seasoned interpreters do a job that seemed too complex for the intern.

When asked how they deal with stressful assignments or lack of confidence, several coping strategies were cited (see Figure 15). Three responses mentioned the use of positive self-talk to help the interpreter. Participant 5 tells themselves that “what happens, happens, and you can’t control the situation.” Two participants use reflection on positive experiences as a coping mechanism for difficult assignments. Participant 3 reminds themselves that they did the best they could do in any given situation. Two participants mentioned using animals to help cope with stressful assignments. Participant 5 looks at pictures of puppies to calm down before an assignment, and Participant 4 plays with their cat to relieve stress after an assignment. Other coping techniques included taking deep breaths, listening to music, and playing video games.

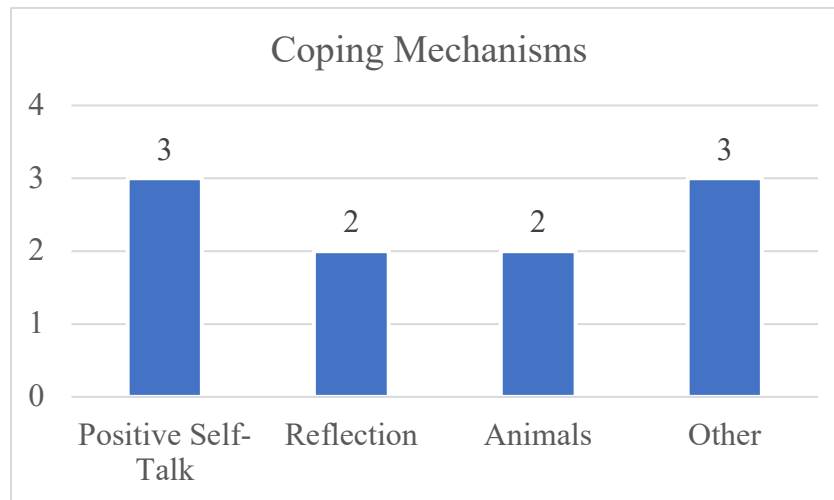


Figure 15. *Coping Mechanisms of Interviewees*

### ***Confidence Scales***

After giving participants their results from the RSES and NGSES that they completed during the online survey phase, I asked them if they felt the scores were an accurate representation of themselves as interpreters. Three of the five interviewees responded that the scores seemed to accurately represent their feelings about themselves.

The other two participants thought that their scores would be lower than they were.

Participant 2 describes themselves as a very goal-oriented person and felt that their self-efficacy score echoed that sentiment. Table 5 displays the self-esteem and self-efficacy scores of the interview participants which were calculated from their survey responses.

Table 5

Interview Participant Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

<u><i>Participant</i></u>	<u><i>Self-Esteem Score</i></u>	<u><i>Self-Efficacy Score</i></u>
2	34	5
3	31	3.875
1	28	3.875
5	26	3.75
4	16	2.25

All five participants admitted feeling that their levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy impacted their interpreting performance. Participant 5 has noticed that when “you have lower self-esteem ... that is reflected in your interpreting.” Participant 3 commented that their level of self-esteem/self-efficacy effects how they process information and events that are happening in any given moment. Three participants believed their lack of confidence and negative self-image caused hindrances in their success as an interpreter.

## **Discussion**

Before conducting the present research, I hypothesized that there would be a relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy in prospective and novice interpreters, self-perceived competence would be linked to self-perceived confidence, and that graduates of four-year interpreting programs would perceive themselves as more competent and confident than graduates of two-year programs and students still enrolled

in an ITP. I also hypothesized that the implementation of high-power poses would help improve interpreter self-perceived confidence.

### ***Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy***

The findings of this study showed a strong positive correlation between the self-esteem and self-efficacy of prospective and novice interpreters, which supports my hypothesis. This finding is in line with previous research that noted a relationship between these two constructs (Chen et al., 2004; Deuling & Burns, 2017; Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Lane et al., 2004). Participants believed that their levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy had an impact on their interpreting performance. High levels of confidence lead to better performance, while low levels of confidence have negative impacts on performance. It is evident from the results that insecurity and lack of confidence is an obstacle for novice interpreter success.

A possible relationship between gender and ethnicity and confidence was identified in the results. I did not focus on the impacts of gender and ethnicity, but this relationship could not be ignored. Female participants had higher self-esteem and self-efficacy scores on average than male participants. Also, interpreters of color had higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy on average than White interpreters.

### ***Competence versus Confidence***

The results suggest there is a link between self-perceived competence and self-perceived confidence of prospective and novice interpreters, which supports my hypothesis. The majority of participants sought ways to improve their skills (e.g., through deliberate practice, attending workshops, and seeking mentors) as a means to improving their level of confidence. The relationship between competence and confidence are in

accord with previous research findings (Holland et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2018; Norton, 2019).

An interesting finding was the difference in self-esteem and self-efficacy of two-year program graduates, four-year program graduates, and students still enrolled in ITPs (see Table 1). Participants still enrolled in an ITP had the highest average self-esteem scores, followed by two-year program graduates. Four-year program graduates had the lowest average self-esteem scores. The highest average self-efficacy scores were held by two-year program graduates, followed by participants who were still enrolled in an ITP. Again, four-year program graduates had the lowest average self-efficacy scores. Also, four-year program graduates had the highest percent of respondents who answered “no” when asked if they felt competent and confident in their skills as interpreters (see Figure 6 and Figure 8). This does not support my original hypothesis.

A possible explanation of this discovery could be found in a psychological model called the four stages of competence. Broadwell (1969) described four levels as:

- Unconscious incompetence,
- Conscious incompetence,
- Conscious competence, and
- Unconscious competence.

It is possible that interpreting students and two-year program graduates believe they are more competent and have higher confidence levels because they are unconsciously incompetent. They may be unaware that they are lacking skills necessary to be proficient in interpreting. Four-year program graduates may have lower self-perceived competence and confidence because they are consciously incompetent. They



may be aware of the skills necessary to be truly successful but not yet proficient in those skills.

### ***Implementation of High-Power Poses***

The results show a possible benefit of utilizing high-power poses before stressful interpreting assignments. The majority of participants said that holding a power pose before providing an interpreting sample made them feel better about the act of interpreting. This finding partially supports my hypothesis, but there is not enough data to provide concrete evidence that high-power poses cause a boost in confidence.

To further study the impact of utilizing high-power poses on interpreter confidence and competence, researchers would need to analyze and rate interpreting samples from participants. Also, Deaf consumers could be recruited to review participant interpreting samples and determine whether they felt an interpreter was confident and trustworthy based on the interpreter's performance. Hopefully the present research can be used as a springboard for more in-depth investigation of the benefits of high-power poses.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

### Recommendations

The findings of the present study show the importance of confidence in prospective and novice interpreters. Interpreters must find ways to navigate the lack of confidence in order to meet their goals. Since competence and confidence are related to one another, I suggest that prospective and novice interpreters continue to work on skill improvement. This can be done through deliberate practice, attending workshops, seeking mentors, becoming more involved in the Deaf community, or diversifying their work. ITPs could develop curriculum that allows for experiential learning. Hunsaker (2020) suggested that experiential learning allows “students to apply theory in authentic, low-risk environments” while also inviting “the Deaf community into the classroom to increase their participation in interpreting students’ education” (p. 53). Also, targeted programs to help newly graduated interpreters prepare for the BEI Performance exam could help improve interpreter competence.

Students of ITPs could benefit if programs focused not only on technical competencies, but also the cultivation of the interpreter. Beliefs about the “self” have shown to impact interpreter performance and cause problems for interpreter success. If ITPs provided students with more tools for confidence building, students may be better equipped to tackle demanding assignments and tests, like the BEI performance exam. Shack et al. (2018) described a confidence and self-esteem boosting workshop that was used to improve self-esteem of artists. This model could possibly be adapted to conform to the confidence boosting needs of interpreters.

It is also important for interpreters to have coping strategies for dealing with high-stress scenarios. This study suggests that holding a high-power pose before interpreting can help interpreters feel more positive about their interpreting performance. Other coping techniques that could be implemented in conjunction with high-power poses are positive self-talk and reflection on past positive experiences among others.

### **Future Research**

This study was a starting point for research concerning self-esteem and self-efficacy of novice American Sign Language/English interpreters. Extended research should include a larger and more diverse sample size. Furthermore, research should look at whether utilizing a power pose actually improves interpreting accuracy. Also, consumers should be consulted to see whether they are more inclined to trust interpreters who implement a high-power pose before an assignment or those who do not.

Longitudinal research documenting self-esteem and self-efficacy over time could be beneficial to the fields of interpreting and interpreter education. In this type of study, confidence and competence levels could be studied over time to acquire a more reliable understanding of the relationship between these two constructs. I also recommend the use of the Interpreting Self-Efficacy (ISE) scale developed by Lee (2014) for undergraduate interpreting students in Korea. The use of this scale could provide more pointed self-efficacy results for interpreters than the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (Chen et al., 2001) used in the present study. Future research should also look more deeply at how gender and ethnicity influence interpreter confidence.

The road to becoming an interpreter is not an easy one. It takes years of training, and prospective interpreters in the state of Texas are required to showcase their skills for

the BEI performance exam in order to receive certification. Although technical skills are important for success, confidence is an attribute that has an impact on interpreters' abilities to achieve their goals. The present study showed that prospective and novice interpreters believe that self-esteem and self-efficacy influenced their work. Interpreters must find ways to cope with difficult, high-stress situations – whether it be an assignment in the field or a certification exam. A long-term strategy is focusing on interpreting skill improvement since the results of the present study showed a link between competence and confidence. A short-term coping strategy is holding a high-power pose and using positive self-talk for two minutes before engaging in a challenging interpreting scenario. Interpreters who feel more confident in themselves also feel more confident in their interpreting performance. More focus on the cultivation of confidence in prospective and novice interpreters could be what the profession needs to help close the graduation-to-certification gap.

*“Don't fake it till you make it. Fake it till you become it.”*

*–Amy Cuddy*

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## **APPENDIX A: SURVEY RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

Hello, Colleagues and Friends.

My name is Kiarah Moore. I am a student at Western Oregon University, pursuing a Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies degree.

I am researching the effects of personality on novice interpreters. I hope to find whether there is a correlation between a specific personality type and success in interpreting. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. I am seeking participants who are either:

- Enrolled in an interpreter training program,
- Recently graduated from an interpreter training program (3 years or less), or
- Actively pursuing interpreting certification

The link to the anonymous survey is: <https://forms.gle/dP8A6KcwflJdahvv6>

Thank you for your consideration,

Kiarah E. Moore

## APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

### SECTION 1: The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY – Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects – Survey Consent Form

Title of Study: The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters Principal Investigator: Kiarah E. Moore - [kemoore18@mail.wou.edu](mailto:kemoore18@mail.wou.edu)

About Volunteering to Participate: You are being invited to take part in a research study. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not you want to take part in this study.

People who agree to take part in research studies are called “subjects” or “research subjects.” These words are used throughout this consent form. Before you can make your decision, you will need to know what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits of being in this study, and what you will have to do in this study. You may also decide to discuss this study and this form with your family and friends. If you have any questions about the study or about this form, please ask us. If you decide to take part in this study, you must sign this form. We will give you a copy of this form signed by you for you to keep.

Eligibility for participation in this study: In order to be eligible for this study, subjects must be either:

- Enrolled in an interpreter training program,
- Recently graduated from an interpreter training program (3 years or less), or
- Actively pursuing interpreting certification

Purpose of this study: The purpose of this project is to explore at the effects of personality on novice interpreters. The researcher hopes to find whether there is a correlation between a specific personality type and success in interpreting.

Expected duration: Your participation in this study is expected to last about 20 minutes.

Participant Requirements: Should you choose to participate in this study, you will complete an online survey. The survey has several parts and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality: Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject’s name will be paired with a code number, which will appear



on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from these materials in a password protected laptop until the completion of the entire project.

We cannot promise complete secrecy. As part of this research, the only persons other than the principal investigator who may see the work samples provided by subjects are the thesis committee chair and/or two to three additional thesis committee members. The results of this research will be published in a thesis. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

**Risks:** The survey is given on the Google Forms platform. This means that although your survey response may be anonymous to the researcher, it may not be anonymous to Google Forms. Google Forms may store data on their server to use, share, or sell without the knowledge of the researcher. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please inform your principal investigator (Kiarah E. Moore). Should you feel hurt by this study in any way, please reach out to the principal investigator. Suggestions for accommodations will be made on an individual as needed basis.

**Benefits:** While there is no monetary compensation for participation in this study, you may benefit from knowing that you are helping increase the amount of research on American Sign Language/English interpreting. The results of this study may aid in our knowledge of strategies novice interpreters may employ to their advantage.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the course of the study, you may contact me at [kemoore18@mail.wou.edu](mailto:kemoore18@mail.wou.edu) and/or my thesis committee chair, Amanda Smith, by e-mail at [smithar@mail.wou.edu](mailto:smithar@mail.wou.edu). If you have questions/concerns regarding your treatment as a subject, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at [irb@wou.edu](mailto:irb@wou.edu).

1. I hereby give my consent to participate in the research study entitled "The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters" details of which have been provided to me above, including anticipated benefits and risks. I fully understand that I may withdraw from this research project at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. I also understand that I am free to ask questions about any techniques or procedures that will be undertaken. I understand that in the unlikely event of physical or emotional discomfort resulting from this research the investigators will suggest assistance or accommodation. Finally, I understand that the information about me obtained during the course of this study will be kept confidential unless I consent to its release.
  - Accept
  - Decline (Skip to end of survey)

## SECTION 2: Demographic Information

Please type N/A when necessary.

2. What state do you reside in?
    - Drop down list of all 50 states and Washington, D. C.
  3. How old are you?
    - 17 to 24
    - 25 to 34
    - 35 to 44
    - 45 to 54
    - 55 to 64
    - 65 or older
  4. What is your ethnicity?
    - White
    - Hispanic or Latino
    - Black or African American
    - Native American or American Indian
    - Asian/Pacific Islander
    - I prefer not to say
  5. What is your gender?
    - Female
    - Male
    - I prefer not to say
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  6. When did you learn American Sign Language?
    - First language (CODA)
    - As a child
    - During high school
    - During college
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    - High school
    - Professional certificate
    - Associate's degree
    - Bachelor's degree
    - Master's degree
    - Doctoral degree
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  8. What did you receive your certificate/degree in?
    - (Open-ended response)
-

### SECTION 3: (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale)

9. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself AS AN INTERPRETER. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (Mark only one oval per row)

• On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• At times I think I am no good at all.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I feel that I have a number of good qualities.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I am able to do things as well as most other people.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I feel I do not have much to be proud of.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I certainly feel useless at times.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I wish I could have more respect for myself.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

• I take a positive attitude towards myself.  
⇒ Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree

---

### SECTION 4: Interpreter Education

Please type N/A when necessary.

10. Are you currently enrolled in ANY post-secondary education?

- Yes
- No

11. If yes, what degree are you currently pursuing?
- (Open-ended response)

***Current Interpreter Training***

12. Are you currently enrolled in an interpreter training program?
- Yes
  - No
13. If yes, which degree level are you pursuing?
- Associate's
  - Bachelor's
  - N/A
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
14. What interpreter training program do you currently attend? (Name of college/university)
- (Open-ended response)
15. When is your expected graduation date? (Month/Year)
- (Open-ended response)

***Previous Interpreter Training***

16. Did you graduate from an interpreter training program?
- Yes, a 2-year program
  - Yes, a 4-year program
  - No
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
17. What interpreter training program did you attend? (Name of college/university)
- (Open-ended response)
18. What month/year did you graduate from your interpreter training program?
- (Open-ended response)
- 

**SECTION 5:**

19. Do you feel that you are a competent interpreter?
- Yes
  - Sometimes
  - No
20. Why or why not?
- (Open-ended response)
21. What, if anything, are you doing to improve your competence level?
- (Open-ended response)
22. What has been the main roadblock on your road to becoming a successful interpreter?
- (Open-ended response)

23. Are you confident in your skills as an interpreter?
- Yes
  - Sometimes
  - No
24. Why or why not?
25. What, if anything, are you doing to improve your confidence level?
- (Open-ended response)
26. Have you ever felt like you wanted to give up on becoming/being an interpreter?
- Yes
  - No
27. Why or why not?
- (Open-ended response)
- 

## **SECTION 6: Certifications Held**

### ***Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI)***

Please type N/A when necessary.

28. Have you taken the Test of English Proficiency (TEP)?
- Yes, and I passed
  - Yes, but I did not pass
  - Not yet, but I plan on it
  - I do not plan on taking the TEP
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
29. How many times did you sit for this exam before passing?
- 1 (passed on the first try)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - More than 5 times
  - N/A
30. Have you taken the BEI Basic Performance test?
- Yes, and I passed
  - Yes, but I did not pass
  - Not yet, but I plan on it
  - I do not plan on taking the BEI Basic Performance test
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
31. If you have passed, what level of certification do you hold?
- Basic
  - Advanced
  - Master

- N/A
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
32. How many times did you sit for your certification exam before passing?
- 1 (passed on the first try)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - More than 5 times
  - N/A
33. If you hold BEI certification, when did you attain it? (Month/Year)
- (Open-ended response)

***National Interpreter Certification (NIC)***

Please type N/A when necessary.

34. Have you taken the multiple-choice NIC Knowledge Exam?
- Yes, and I passed
  - Yes, but I did not pass
  - Not yet, but I plan on it
  - I do not plan on taking the NIC Knowledge Exam
35. How many times did you sit for this exam before passing?
- 1 (passed on the first try)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - More than 5 times
  - N/A
36. Have you sat for the NIC Interview and Performance Exam?
- Yes, and I passed
  - Yes, but I did not pass
  - Not yet, but I plan on it
  - I do not plan on taking the NIC Interview and Performance Exam
37. How many times did you sit for your certification exam before passing?
- 1 (passed on the first try)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - More than 5 times
  - N/A
38. If you hold NIC certification, when did you attain it? (Month/Year)
- (Open-ended response)

### ***Determining Readiness***

39. How did you/will you determine when you are ready to sit for your performance exam?

- (Open-ended response)
- 

### **SECTION 7: (New General Self-Efficacy Scale)**

40. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself AS AN INTERPRETER. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (Mark only one oval per row.)

- I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree
- Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.  
⇒ Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

---

## **SECTION 8: Interview?**

41. After reviewing responses, the researcher will select some subjects for a one-on-one interview and interpreting sample. Would you be willing to participate in this portion of the study?
- Yes
  - No (Skip to end of survey)

### ***Anonymity Disclaimer***

42. In the next section, contact information will be requested in order to set up an interview should you be chosen by the researcher. Therefore, your responses to this survey will no longer be anonymous. Please be advised, should you choose to continue, your responses will be kept confidential and only the researcher will be aware of your identity. Should you choose to not continue, your response to the survey questions will still be recorded anonymously and used for the purposes of the present research study.
- I agree to continue
  - I do not wish to disclose my contact information for purposes of interview contact (Skip to end of survey)

### ***Contact Information***

43. First and Last Name
- (Open-ended response)
44. Email Address
- (Open-ended response)
45. Where do you currently reside? (City, State)
- (Open-ended response)

END OF SURVEY



## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

Hello (Participant Name),

Thank you for completing the survey for my thesis “The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters”! Furthermore, thank you for being willing to participate in the second portion of this research.

You have been selected to provide an interpreting sample and complete an interview.

Please reply to let me know if you are still interested. Below, I have listed tentative dates and times for interviews. I will need approximately one hour of your time. Let me know if any of these dates work for you or if you have any questions.

### Interview Dates

- Friday, November 29th 10am-4pm
- Tuesday, December 17th 11am-4pm (flexible)
- Friday, December 20th 10am-4pm (flexible)

If none of these dates/times work, please email your availability and I will do my best to accommodate your schedule.

Thanks again for helping to further research in the interpreting profession!

Kind regards,

Kiarah E. Moore

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM (WITH DECEPTION)

### WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

#### Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects INTERVIEW

**Title of Study:** The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters

**Principal Investigator:** Kiarah E. Moore - kemoore18@mail.wou.edu

**About Volunteering to Participate:** You are being invited to take part in a research study. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not you want to take part in this study.

People who agree to take part in research studies are called “subjects” or “research subjects”. These words are used throughout this consent form. Before you can make your decision, you will need to know what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits of being in this study, and what you will have to do in this study. You may also decide to discuss this study and this form with your family or friends. If you have any questions about the study or about this form, please ask us. If you decide to take part in this study, you must sign this form. We will give you a copy of this form signed by you for you to keep.

**Eligibility for participation in this study:** In order to be eligible for this study, *subjects must have already completed the survey for the current study*. In addition, subjects must be either:

- Enrolled in an interpreter training program,
- Recently graduated from an interpreter training program (3 years or less), and/or
- Actively pursuing interpreting certification

**Purpose of this study:** The purpose of this project is to explore the effects of personality on novice interpreters. The researcher hopes to find whether there is a correlation between a specific personality type and success in interpreting.

**Expected duration:** Your participation in this study is expected to last about one hour.

#### ***Participant Requirements:***

Should you agree to sit for a one-on-one interview, a time, date, and location will be coordinated via email. At the in-person meeting, subjects will be asked to interpret a 3-5 minute audio clip from English to ASL. There will be a break and a brief dialogue between the investigator and the subject. Following this, the subject will be asked to

interpret a different 3-5 minute audio clip from English to ASL. The investigator will step out of the room while both interpreting samples are being recorded. Once this is completed, the investigator will conduct a post-interview with the subject. Both interpreting samples will be rated and scored by BEI trained raters.

This entire process will be video recorded in order to reduce the need of excessive note-taking and for analysis at a later date. The in-person meeting should last no longer than one hour.

**Confidentiality:** Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from these materials in a password protected laptop until the completion of the entire project.

We cannot promise complete secrecy. As part of this research, the only persons other than the principal investigator who may see the work samples provided by subjects are the thesis committee chair and/or two to three additional thesis committee members. The results of this research will be published in a thesis. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Recordings will be stored on a restricted computer that only the principal investigator (Kiarah E. Moore) will have access to. This material will be destroyed within 5 years of thesis publication. All videos recordings will be coded to a master list that will be separated from the data and kept in a locked cabinet.

**Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks related to the procedures conducted as part of this study. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please inform your principal investigator (Kiarah E. Moore). Should you feel hurt by this study in any way, please reach out to the principal investigator. Suggestions for accommodations will be made on an individual as needed basis.

**Benefits:** While there is no monetary compensation for participation in this study, you may benefit from knowing that you are helping increase the amount of research on American Sign Language/English interpreting. The results of this study may aid in our knowledge of strategies novice interpreters may employ to their advantage.

**This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the course of the study, you may contact me at kemoore18@mail.wou.edu and/or my thesis committee chair, Amanda Smith, by e-mail at smithar@mail.wou.edu. If you have questions/concerns regarding your treatment as a subject, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.**

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

**WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY**  
**Division of Health and Physical Education**

**Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects**

Title of Project:

**The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters**

Principal Investigator:       Kiarah Moore  
E-mail:                         kemoore18@mail.wou.edu  
Cell Phone:                   (281) 781-5675

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give my consent to participate in the research study entitled “The Perfect Personality: Effects on Novice American Sign Language/English Interpreters” details of which have been provided to me above, including anticipated benefits and risks.

I fully understand that I may withdraw from this research project at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. I also understand that I am free to ask questions about any techniques or procedures that will be undertaken.

I understand that in the unlikely event of physical or emotional discomfort resulting from this research the investigators will suggest assistance or accommodation. I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Finally, I understand that the information about me obtained during the course of this study will be kept confidential unless I consent to its release. *(Return signature page to researcher; keep remaining pages for your records.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participants Signature

I hereby certify that I have given an explanation to the above individual of the contemplated study, benefits, and its risks.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW DEBRIEFING CONSENT FORM

### WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

#### Informed Consent for Research Involving Human Subjects Debriefing Statement and Consent

**Title of Study:** *Cultivating Confidence: Embodying Self-Efficacy in Novice Signed Language Interpreters*

**Principal Investigator:** Kiarah E. Moore – kemoore18@mail.wou.edu

Thank you for your participation thus far in the study. Remember, your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether or not you want to take part in this study.

**Purpose of this study and use of deception:** The purpose of this project is to look at the effects of personality on interpreting. More specifically, in the present study, I aim to determine how relevant the concern of confidence is in novice interpreters. I will also study the effects of the usage of power poses as a strategy for improving interpreter self-confidence. Deception was used so that the participants would not know the true purpose of the study before providing interpreting samples. This was done in an attempt to receive genuine interpreting samples without the subject focused on being perceived as confident.

Therefore, interpreting samples will NOT be rated by BEI rates for accuracy. All video recordings will be stored on a separate memory card which will be destroyed five years after data collection.

Now that I have explained this study more fully, you may request that I do not use the data collected from you for this research study. If you decide that you do not want the researcher to use the data collected from you, there is no penalty and your data will not be included in the study.

You are urged not to discuss this study with anyone else who is currently participating or might participate at a future time. As you can certainly appreciate, we will not be able to examine true feelings of confidence or lack thereof in participants who know about the true purpose of the project beforehand.

**Confidentiality:** Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from these materials in a password protected laptop until the completion of the entire project.

We cannot promise complete secrecy. As part of this research, the only persons other than the principal investigator who may see the work samples provided by subjects are the thesis committee chair and/or up to three additional thesis committee members. The results of this research will be published in a thesis. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Recordings will be stored on a restricted computer that only the principal investigator (Kiarah E. Moore) will have access to. This material will be destroyed within 5 years of thesis publication. All video recordings will be coded to a master list that will be separated from the data and kept in a locked cabinet.

**Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks related to the procedures conducted as part of this study. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please inform your principal investigator (Kiarah E. Moore). Should you feel hurt by this study in any way, please reach out to the principal investigator. Suggestions for accommodations will be made on an individual as needed basis.

**Benefits:** While there is no monetary compensation for participation in this study, you may benefit from knowing that you are helping increase the amount of research on American Sign Language/English interpreting. The results of this study may aid in our knowledge of strategies novice interpreters may employ to their advantage.

**This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Should you have any questions or concerns throughout the course of the study, you may contact me at kemoore18@mail.wou.edu and/or my thesis committee chair, Amanda Smith, by e-mail at smithar@mail.wou.edu. If you have questions/concerns regarding your treatment as a subject, you may contact the Chair of the WOU Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 503-838-9200 or via e-mail at irb@wou.edu.**

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

I hereby certify that I agree to continue my participation in this study. I understand that the interpreting samples collected will be evaluated by consumers in the community for confidence markers. I agree to continue to the interview portion of this study.

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Participant's Signature

I hereby certify that I have given an explanation to the above individual of the contemplated study and its risks and potential complications.

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Principal Investigator

## APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Hello! My name is Kiarah Moore. Nice to meet you. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study.

As a reminder, you will be providing interpreting samples and participating in an interview today. Both the interpreting samples and the interview will be video recorded. Let's review the consent form and have you sign a hard copy.

Now that we have that out of the way, we are going to get started with the first interpreting sample. You will be interpreting from English to ASL. This video is approximately 5 minutes long. (Allow participant to read video description).

*Video description:* More than 90 percent of children in the US see a doctor at least once a year, which means countless hours spent in waiting rooms for parents. What if those hours could be used for something productive -- like saving money? Through her organization StreetCred, pediatrician and TED Fellow Lucy Marcil is offering free tax prep to parents right in the waiting room, reimagining what a doctor's visit can look like and helping to lift families out of poverty. Learn more about how free tax prep and guidance could be the best poverty prescription we have in the US.

So, I will set up the camera and step out of the room while you provide your sample. Remember, these samples will be rated for accuracy by BEI-trained raters, so do your best!

*\*First interpretation\**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy\\_marcil\\_why\\_doctors\\_are\\_offering\\_free\\_tax\\_prep\\_in\\_their\\_waiting\\_rooms?utm\\_campaign=tedsread&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=tedcomshare](https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_marcil_why_doctors_are_offering_free_tax_prep_in_their_waiting_rooms?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare)

- So how did that feel?
- What is one thing you liked about your interpretation?
- What is one thing you disliked about your interpretation?

Please watch this video describing “power poses.” <https://youtu.be/OGyANgRtHRI>

Now that you've learned a little about high power poses versus low power poses, we will get ready to begin the second interpreting sample. Again, you will be interpreting from English to ASL. This video is approximately 5 ½ minutes long. (Allow participant to read video description).

*Video description:* Every month, millions of Americans face an impossible choice: pay for energy to power their homes, or pay for basic needs like food and medicine. TED Fellow DeAndrea Salvador is working to reduce energy costs so that no one has to make this kind of decision. In this quick talk, she shares her plan to help low-income families

reduce their bills while also building a cleaner, more sustainable and more affordable energy future for us all.

Now that you've learned a little about power poses, I would like you to choose one expansive high-power pose and hold it for one minute. I'll time you, then we'll start the second sample.

*\*Show participant the five high power poses to choose from\**

*Power pose chosen: \_\_\_\_\_*

*\*Hold power pose for one minute\**

Again, remember, BEI raters will be taking a look at these, so give it your all!

*\*Second interpretation\**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/deandrea\\_salvador\\_how\\_we\\_can\\_make\\_energy\\_more\\_affordable\\_for\\_low\\_income\\_families?utm\\_campaign=tedsread&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=tedcomshare](https://www.ted.com/talks/deandrea_salvador_how_we_can_make_energy_more_affordable_for_low_income_families?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare)

- So how did that feel?
- What is one thing you liked about your interpretation?
- What is one thing you disliked about your interpretation?

OK, so I have a confession. Although I said that the purpose of this study was to explore the correlation between personalities and interpreting, I am really looking more closely at your self-confidence and how it impacts your interpreting. Your samples WILL NOT be rated by BEI-trained raters. (Review debriefing document.)

*\*Continue interview\**

1. Before today, had you ever heard of the “power pose”?
2. Do you prefer interpreting for live consumers or for a video recording?
3. What, if anything, gives you anxiety about interpreting in general?
4. What, if anything, gives you anxiety about the BEI performance test?
5. How do you cope with stressful assignments?
6. Describe a time when you have felt confident about your interpreting skills.
7. Describe a time that you did not feel good enough to be an interpreter? How did you get past that?
8. What is your biggest fear about interpreting?



9. Tell me more about your survey response regarding your level of competence as an interpreter.
10. Tell me more about your survey response regarding your level of confidence as an interpreter.
11. Tell me more about your survey response regarding the main roadblock on your road to becoming a successful interpreter.

Possible follow-up questions that may be asked during the semi-structured interview:

1. Was there anything else that you would like to share that you have not yet had an opportunity to share?
2. Tell me more about your response to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Please give me an example to your response to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What other information would you like to add?
5. Tell me more about your answer.
6. Please give me an example that clarifies your answer.

\*Give results from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale\*

1. From the description of these results, are these the results you expected?
2. What was not expected from these results?
3. How do you think self-esteem and self-efficacy affect your interpreting performance?