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Abstract

Interpretations of employment interviews delivered by signed language interpreters may be considered high stakes by the deaf applicant who aims to gain employment. The information shared in a job interview and the language used to express the information have a direct influence on the impression the applicant makes to the hiring manager/committee. Job applicants aim to portray qualification for the position, experience in the field of interest, motivation to become a member of the team, and confidence in their ability to contribute their knowledge and skills to the position. Historically, attaining employment may be challenging for deaf applicants for a variety of reasons. It may be that hiring managers/committees have chosen not to offer opportunities to job applicants from diverse backgrounds with which they are unfamiliar. This pertains to race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, and many other factors that are a part of a person's identity. Additionally, employment interviews have shown to favor the communication style of mainstream populations. Deaf job seekers may be unsuccessful in gaining employment for a variety of reasons (e.g., experience, knowledge, skill); however, it is important to recognize the influence that an interpreter may have on their success in gaining employment. The interpretation of a deaf applicant's response to interview questions, as well as any questions they offer to the hiring committee when offered the opportunity, may include disfluencies that lead an employer to doubt a candidate's ability to successfully perform the work.

This study analyzes the interpretations offered by 47 ASL-English interpreters when presented with a recorded employment interview for an accounting position. The employment interview was specifically conducted in a manner similar to that which would be experienced in a Video Relay Service (VRS) setting (e.g., lack of extensive prep material, interpretations conducted from a distance via video, no visual connection to the hearing participant). The ASL to English interpretations produced in this study often include qualifiers (e.g., sometimes, somewhat, I guess, I think) and hesitations (e.g., uh, um, well) that may contribute to negative impressions in an employment interview. Novice interpreters would benefit from increased knowledge of disfluencies in order to better identify patterns surrounding when they occur in their own work. By preparing students to recognize disfluencies and identify where and why they occur as well as strategies for addressing this challenge, they can strengthen ASL to English interpretations of employment interviews.

Keywords: disfluency, hedging, hesitations

Introduction

Gaining employment is often considered by job applicants to be an important yet challenging endeavor. Regardless of the age of the applicant, their prior experience, or the position for which they apply, applicants acknowledge the influence of both preparedness for work as well as the impression that they leave with the person(s) leading the hiring process. Majority populations are able to obtain employment with greater success than marginalized groups because the employment interview strongly favors the characteristics of dominant groups, defined as "white, upper or middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, masculine, and privileged" individuals (Buzzanell, 1999, p. 136). The candidates who embody these characteristics may be considered more qualified by employers who envision the applicant suitable for the position to possess certain characteristics.

In the United States, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits employers from discriminating against qualified job candidates with disabilities in the hiring process. However, this legislation does not prevent potential employers from rejecting job candidates that they assess to be unqualified. Qualification for employment can be seen within the applicant's résumé as well as via the impression that they make during the employment interview. While deaf applicants may present as qualified via the résumé, an additional contributing factor to selection for hire is the impression they leave during the interview. This includes their own visual presentation of self as well as the interpreter's ASL to English interpretation in conversation. For example, qualified deaf job seekers may put time and effort into their own presentation of self, including researching the company for which they are applying and rehearsing the interview as they foresee it being conducted. The interpreter for a job interview that is being conducted on-site or via Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), if the interpreter is scheduled in advance, may have the ability to prepare for the job interview by reviewing the résumé, looking online at information regarding the company and position, as well as speaking with the deaf applicant for a short time prior to the interview. This is not the case when the interview is conducted via Video Relay Service (VRS) and, therefore, without additional time to support the interpreting process. With the limitations imposed in VRS settings, the speech produced by an interpreter is likely to include the types of disfluencies found most objectionable by potential employers. Due to unfamiliarity with the content within the conversation (e.g., job description, résumé of applicant, familiarity with applicant's style of speech), ASL to English interpretations may incorporate disfluencies in language production, which may influence the applicant's likelihood for hire. This challenge is important to address so it can then be incorporated into practice opportunities and reflection in interpreter education.

To develop this argument, we first address impression management in employment interviews, with a specific emphasis on the verbal communication behaviors that will be under the purview of an interpreter in an interview with a deaf candidate and a hearing interviewer. Next, we review the data from 47 different English interpretations of a series of interview questions answered in ASL (see Appendix 1). Our goal is not to provide a definitive answer regarding the one key to success for deaf candidates in employment interviews, but to open a larger discussion about how interpreters influence the impression of employability of deaf people.

Literature Review

Stereotypes About Deaf Employees

The term "audism" was originally defined by Tom Humphries in 1975 (as cited in Bauman, 2004) as "the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears" (p. 240). Much like other "isms" like racism and sexism, audism can be seen throughout society in daily interactions. Bauman (2004) expanded on the original definition of audism, adding that audism is pervasive at both the individual as well as the systemic level in that systems are designed for people who hear. Those

who can easily access such systems can be seen to have privilege. Bauman (2004) noted that as the daily effortlessness of access to such systems has "become a part of hearing centered 'common sense,' deaf people come into contact with audist attitudes, judgements, and actions with great frequency throughout their lives" (p. 240). In a world that perceives the use of spoken English and auditory communication as the norm, deaf people are largely perceived in society as disabled, possessing a sensory impairment that inhibits aspects of life.

Lane (2008) argued that the perception of deaf people as disabled is longstanding in history and suggests that disability is a product of the capitalist society in which we live. History has strongly influenced society's perspective toward disability and employment. Lane (2007) notes that capitalist society aims to incorporate all people into the labor force and reduce incidence of public aid; therefore, political pressure has historically been exerted toward supporting disabled people in gaining employment through efforts such as vocational rehabilitation and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Political support has also taken the form of efforts to teach people with disabilities a trade skill as opposed to the knowledge and skills that would prepare them for a "profession" by today's standards.

In this same vein, Lane (2008) suggested the industrial revolution triggered society's categorization of people into those who could work and those who could not. The industrial revolution resulted in the need to "measure, evaluate, create hierarchies, and examine distributions" (p. 278) of people in order to determine who qualifies for support. Those who qualified for support were candidates for additional systemic efforts toward intervention including audiology, surgery, and rehabilitation. Garberoglio et al. (2016) argued that regardless of supports offered by systems, "individuals with disabilities tend to participate in the labor force at lower rates than those without disabilities" (p. 7). The authors go on to say that those who achieve higher levels of education are more likely to be employed; however, they are still not employed at the same rate as those in the labor force without a disability.

The Importance of Impression Management

Interviewers bring beliefs about the ideal candidate to the interview session, along with ideas about the types of persons who should be hired (Dipboye et al., 2012). As a result, interviewers tend to produce assessments of candidates that are based on impressions, personal feelings related to similarity between the applicant and interviewer, and other factors that may not be directly related to a candidate's ability to perform the job at hand (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Barrick et al., 2009; Harris, 1989; Judge et al., 2000; Posthuma et al., 2002). Impression management, therefore, is a crucial aspect of the employment interview experience for any job candidate, but especially for a deaf job candidate. The deaf candidate must overcome a preconceived bias regarding deafness to create an impression that they are both qualified for the job and, just as important, a good fit in the organization. Levashina et al. (2014) defined impression management as a "process by which people attempt to influence the images others form of them during social interaction" (p. 256) and argued that the short duration and interpersonal nature of an employment interview creates a high-stakes context for job applicants to engage in impression management.

The content of speech is not the only way that verbal behaviors make an impression. In their study of language and paralinguistic choices made by respondents when answering questions, Smith and Clark (1993) argued that the use of language, including utterances and disfluencies, is in itself a part of self-presentation tactics. They explain: "In formulating and producing utterances, speakers attend to their audience's interpretation of what they are doing moment by moment" (p. 36). A deaf candidate in an employment interview with a hearing interviewer relies on an interpreter to provide speech, and that speech, including all of its disfluencies, is a crucial part of the impression formed by the interviewer of the job candidate.

Einhorn (1981) argued that successful interviewees use more active and concrete language while unsuccessful applicants tend to preface remarks with qualifiers like "I think," "I guess," and "I feel" (p. 225). Einhorn's (1981) assessment is that the use of these qualifiers "made [job candidates] appear indecisive,

unassertive, and lacking in confidence and competence" (p. 225). In addition to disfluencies, Russell et al. (2008) found that hesitations influenced the impressions made on interviewers. Specifically, participants in their study were least likely to hire interviewees who used the word "like" during their interview as compared to those who used the word "uh" or refrained from inclusion of hesitations at all (Russell et al., 2008, p. 117). Through this lens, we investigate the impact that an interpreter has on the impression of a deaf job applicant.

Disfluencies, Hesitations, and the Interpreting Process

If, in fact, factors such as delays in response, increased hesitations, and disfluencies impact an interviewer's impression of a job candidate, then a deaf job candidate communicating through an interpreter is immediately at a disadvantage as these features are common in simultaneous interpretation. Gile (2009) argued that "interpreting requires 'mental energy' that is only available in limited supply" (p. 159). The energy required to interpret, while limited, is then divided among a series of mental processes, including a) listening and analysis, b) production, c) short-term memory, and d) coordination. Using this model, effort is required to receive and analyze an incoming message, remember the message for a period of time, produce an equivalent message in the target language, and coordinate where cognitive energy is being directed (e.g., applying more effort to listening if the speaker is not audible). When energy is managed in a way that supports one task over others, those aspects with a deficit in energy will suffer. For example, if an interpreter is unfamiliar with the content of a message, such as may be the case for a job interview with specialized jargon, they will apply energy to listening and analysis. This emphasis on listening will leave the production effort with a deficit, resulting in errors or linguistic anomalies including long pauses, hesitations, and false starts.

Analyzing a message, including the identification of speaker goals and objectives as well as the comprehension of terms, requires time and attention. One strategy that interpreters may use to mediate cognitive demands is to incorporate fillers and hesitations. Dickerson (1971) argues that speakers in everyday communication use fillers as a way of "buying time for thinking during speech" (p. 9). It comes as no surprise that interpreters utilize this same strategy in response to the cognitive demands associated with their work. A corpus-based study of spoken language interpreting by Plevoets and Defrancq (2016) agrees that filled pauses, such as the use of "uh" or "um" occur in an interpreted message due to the cognitive load required to both listen to a message and produce a different message under time constraints. The authors add that cognitive load increases in the presence of lexical density as well as increased sentence length of a source language message. Plevoets and Defrancq (2016) go on to say that interpreters often employ strategies such as source language chunking to mediate lexical density and decrease cognitive demand; however, most of the control that an interpreter has over an interpretation is applied to the message they are delivering, not the one they are receiving. In this case, a tool such as the incorporation of filler words, such as that offered by Dickerson (1971), may be a way that interpreters are increasing the amount of time that they have available to them for the purposes of planning their next message.

In addition to increasing the amount of planning time available to an interpreter, hesitations may also be a tool employed by interpreters (consciously or subconsciously) to avoid committing to an interpretation too strongly out of fear of being incorrect (Hale, 2002). Hale (2002) goes on to say that interpreters often exclusively consider content in their judgment of the accuracy of an interpretation; however, those who are listening to an interpretation are framing opinions of the signer based solely on the English interpretation. Fitzmaurice and Purdy (2015) noted that metanotative qualities as simple as disfluent pausing may lead an audience to perceive speakers as lacking education or knowledge in their field. They may be perceived as nervous, unorganized, untrustworthy, or unable to express themselves clearly. Non-signing listeners expect that interpreters are maintaining both content and style in their interpretations (Feyne, 2015). Any disfluencies noted by the non-signing conversational participant may be attributed to the deaf person,

as opposed to the interpreting process, which may lead the interviewer to rank a deaf candidate below another candidate with lesser content but better vocal delivery.

Methods

Research Questions

Acknowledging previous scholarship establishing the impact that verbal disfluencies and hesitations have on the impressions made by employers during job interviews, this quantitative study investigates the following three research questions:

1. How many times do the phrases "I think," "I guess," and "I feel" appear in the transcriptions of ASL-English interpreters' interpretation of the ASL interview question answers?
2. How many times does the word "like" used as a hesitation appear in the transcriptions of ASL-English interpreters' interpretation of the ASL interview question answers?
3. How many times do hesitations including "uh," "um," "well," and "you know" appear in the transcriptions of ASL-English interpreters' interpretation of the ASL interview question answers?

Source Text in ASL

To explore the potential impressions left by deaf job applicants during a job interview led by a non-signing hiring manager, this study consisted of a source text (8 minutes and 30 seconds) showing written job interview questions on the screen followed by responses by the applicant in ASL. The recording was interpreted by 47 participants connected to the researchers via video. This method supports consistency of the source language in order to produce comparable resulting interpretations as well as to create an environment similar to that experienced in Video Relay Service (VRS), a telecommunication service for deaf people supported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States. The interpreter, located in a call center environment, is visible to the deaf person via streamed video connection, but is not visible to the non-deaf interlocutor at all. In the case of a job screening interview conducted via VRS, the lack of visibility of the deaf job applicant leaves the employer to rely solely on the impression gained from the interpreter's voice. In order to maintain similarity to an interpretation offered in a VRS setting, participants were told that they are interpreting a job interview; however, participants were *not* given any additional information such as the name of the applicant, the position for which they are applying, or a résumé that would likely be helpful in preparing for the interpretation.

Focusing on interpretations offered in a VRS environment is beneficial in many ways. At this time, many job interviews are offered in this manner due to the increase in work being conducted from a distance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, while the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against deaf job candidates, the law applies only to employers with 15 or more employees (ADA.gov, n.d.). Large employers are also more likely to be willing to accept the potential financial implications of interviewing and hiring deaf professionals. These large organizations are the ones that are most likely to use phone interviews as a method of screening candidates.

Participants

Participants in this study were recruited using an email shared with the Video Interpreters Members Section (VIMS) of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) as well as with interpreters working for one of the leading corporations providing Video Relay Service in the United States. The recruitment email

shared that the research being conducted focuses on the interpretations of job interviews provided by interpreters in the Video Relay Service setting. While participants were aware of the general purpose of the meeting (a job interview), they were not offered additional information such as the applicant's résumé or a detailed position description as these materials would not be made available in advance of a VRS call. To take part, applicants first completed a demographic questionnaire. Next, using the GoToMeeting program, each participant offered an interpretation of the ASL source text. The video began with a written text sharing that the applicant is pursuing an Accounting Analyst position. Then, each question was displayed as text on the screen prior to the applicant's answer. The interview was recorded using QuickTime. Each participant was sent a $10 gift card via email for participation.

This study yielded recordings of 47 interpreters providing English interpretations of the source text video consisting of responses to interview questions offered by the deaf applicant in ASL. In the demographic questionnaire, 36 participants self-identified as female, and 11 identified as male. ("Non-binary/third gender" was an option, but no participants selected this option). Participants in this study were working ASL-English interpreters who had at least 3 years of experience interpreting (see Table 1) as well as a minimum of 1 year working in Video Relay Service (see Table 2). While 11 participants (23%) had worked as an interpreter in the VRS setting for 10 years or more, 18 participants reported that they had interpreted in the VRS setting for 4 years or less.

Table 1

Self-Reported Years of Experience Interpreting

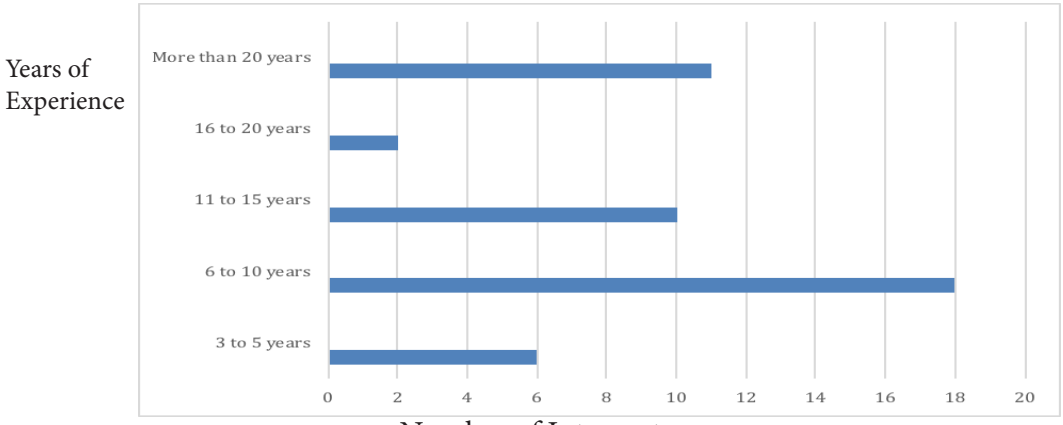
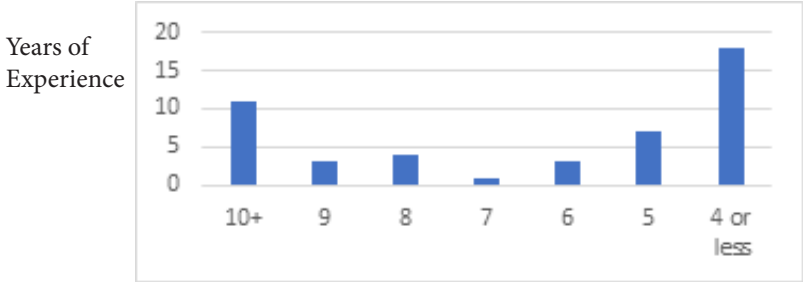


Table 2

Years of Experience in VRS

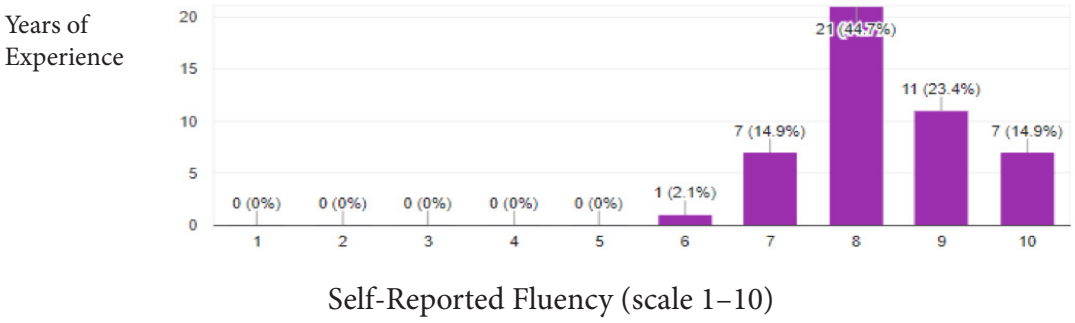


Participants

The interpreters in this study largely held certification, whether state or national, accepted in the field of ASL-English interpreting. Of the 47 participants in this study, only three indicated that they do not hold certification. Forty participants hold national interpreter certification through the Registry of Interpreters for the deaf. The remainder of participants hold either state license or specialized interpreter certification in an educational setting. On a scale of 1–10, participants largely self-reported an ASL fluency of 6 or above (see Table 3). While self-report may not be the most accurate measure of an interpreter's fluency with ASL, we can conclude based on the data collected from participating interpreters that our participants are credentialed working interpreters who have confidence in their own abilities.

Table 3

Self-Reported Fluency in ASL



The majority of participants (37 participants, 79%) reported that they had completed an interpreter training program. Of these 37 participants, 19 had completed an associate's degree, 13 participants completed a bachelor's degree, and two graduated with a master's degree associated with interpreting. It is important to recognize that participants in this study are not largely novice interpreters who produce disfluencies as the result of a lack of experience, a lack of training, or a lack of fluency in ASL or English. The disfluencies found in this study are evidence that, as previous scholarship has suggested, hesitations, hedges, and other disfluencies are frequently present in the English speech produced by ASL-English interpreters in a simultaneous interpreting situation.

Data Analysis

After data sessions were recorded, each participant's English interpretation of interview question answers was transcribed using a combination of the Trint service and manual transcription. These transcriptions were then imported into HyperTranscribe software and automatically coded for the words and phrases under consideration. The researchers reviewed the results of the autocoding manually to confirm that each recorded instance was in fact a disfluency and not another incidental use of one of the highlighted words. The scripts were then investigated twice (once by each of the researchers) to determine the number of verbal disfluencies present within each interpretation.

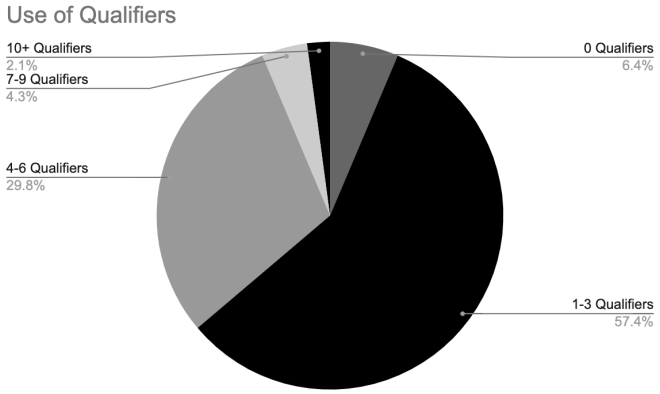
Results

Review of the transcribed and coded data revealed that instances of types of speech that have been found to create unfavorable impressions in an employment interview were present in each interpreter's English interpretation. However, the number of instances in each interpretation varied dramatically and one type of disfluency in particular was most prevalent.

"I Think," "I Guess," "I Feel"

The qualifiers "I think," "I guess," and "I feel," were used by 44 out of the 47 interpreters; however, it is important to note that these qualifiers were never used by the deaf job applicant in responses to the interview questions in ASL. While qualifiers were present in the majority of interpretations, the number of instances of qualifiers added by each interpreter varied (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Frequency of Qualifiers Among All Participants



Qualifiers, such as "I think," "I guess," and "I feel," are often used by interpreters to increase processing time as they unpack the information shared in the source message. These short utterances offer the opportunity to monitor their work for accuracy before being steadfast in an interpretation. While qualifiers may be a tactic often applied by novice interpreters to reduce the need to correct an error, they may be perceived by employers as a sign of uncertainty or a lack of confidence in response. While 57% of the interpreters used qualifiers between one and three times, there were also two interpreters who used them eight times and one interpreter who used qualifiers 15 times. While the applicant was the same person with the same qualifications, the likelihood for hire of this applicant will differ greatly depending on the interpretation of the interview.

In order to show the effect of varying numbers of qualifiers on the applicant's response to an interview quest, the interpretation of the answer to one interview question will be reviewed. The question, "What made you apply for the Accounting Analyst position?" resulted in varying use of qualifiers within the applicant's response. An answer incorporating one qualifier is as follows:

> Well, I want to become a CPA in the future. That's my goal. And I want to gain more experience in different areas. So right now **I feel like** I already have the basic foundational skills that I need, and I am looking for an opportunity to increase my experience and skills.

Another answer to this question includes two qualifiers:

> I hope I get to learn some new skills. Um, yeah. I— **I guess** that's the main thing, is that, uh, cleaning up in detailed areas. I've already experienced several, uh, different fields and **I think** this is an opportunity to get myself broadening my skill set and that it will help me, uh, with that goal of becoming a CPA.

It is important to note that a lack of use of qualifiers does not indicate that an applicant is more likely for hire. There are additional factors that influence employers' perceptions of job applicants and, therefore, their likelihood for hire. However, the variation in the number of qualifiers that were added (15 at the most and none at the least) suggests that interpreters added qualifiers not because of any cue from the deaf job candidate but for a reason stemming from each interpreter. For example, the addition of a qualifier may be due to the interpreter's effort not to commit to the interpretation.

Einhorn's (1981) article indicated merely that successful candidates used "more active and concrete language" than unsuccessful candidates, who used more qualifiers (p. 225). Einhorn did not specify how many qualifiers must be inserted into speech for it to be considered lacking in active and concrete language. However, since the deaf candidate did not use qualifiers in ASL, we can conclude that the English speech produced by the ASL-English interpreters who did add qualifiers could potentially negatively impact the impression formed of the deaf candidate, and that negative impression would not result from the deaf candidate but rather from the speech of the interpreter.

"Like"

The use of the hesitation "like" occurred in 19 out of 47 transcribed interpretations. The interpretation with the greatest number of "like" hesitations had six instances. An example of an interpretation where the "like" hesitation was used two times is as follows:

> Um, I went to college and I got a BA in business administration. And, uh, I've had two jobs, uh, in the past eight years. I have experience with accounting. And, uh, in the past I started as, **like**, a basic level, you know, **like**, inputting information into accounting systems.

Another example with a single use of "like" is as follows:

> I moved around to two different jobs, and have for about 18 years, so over experience in accounting. Um, so before, to the before I started it was more of a basic, **like** entry-level position. I would enter information into an accounting system, and slowly I gained experience.

The hesitation "like" may be perceived by employers as a form of uncertainty or potentially a lack of confidence in the response. Additionally, it could be considered as a lack of professionalism and may impact their likelihood for hire. Similarly, data analysis found that "like" hesitations were present in 19 interpretations, but that the median number of "like" hesitations found in all 47 interpretations was zero. The variation in the number of "like" hesitations that were added (six at the most and none at the least) again suggests that these hesitations were not the result of a cue provided by the deaf job candidate but rather a verbal disfluency resulting from the interpreting process. While we cannot definitively conclude that the number of "like" hesitations produced by interpreters in our study would negatively impact the impression interviewers formed of this deaf job candidate, we do argue that the presence of any "like"

hesitations in our transcripts is evidence that ASL-English interpreters have the potential to negatively impact the impression formed by deaf job candidates.

"Um," "Uh," "Well," "You Know"

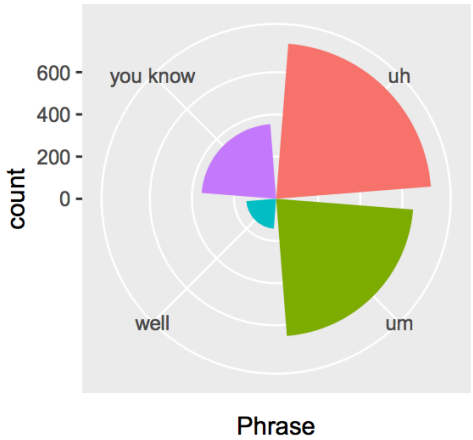
The use of the hesitations "um," "uh," "well," or "you know" occurred in all 47 transcribed interpretations. The interpretation with the greatest number of "um," "uh," "well," or "you know" hesitations had 115 instances, and the interpretation with the smallest number had only one instance. The median number of instances for all 47 interpretations was 34 hesitations per interpretation. One example of an interpretation that had close to the median number of "um," "uh," "well," or "you know" hesitations is as follows:

> I was working in, **uh**, the billing department at once at one point and there was, **uh**, a client who, **uh**, owed some money to the firm and I was corresponding with this person via email and I got a, a response, **uh**, that was, **uh**, required me to look back three months, **uh**, to, **uh**, find out what was, **uh**, incorrect with this particular, **um**, document so I had to, **uh,** go back. I did find that and then I alerted the customer and they were very satisfied and pleased that we were able to work it out.

Below is another example from a transcription that had close to the median number of hesitations.

> I went to a workshop recently. I think it was a couple of months ago, and the focus was on audits. (pause) They looked at, **uh**, how we can, **um**, **uh**, take a look at our own work to avoid the audits, how to identify risks, how to solve it, how to sustain, **um**, having, **uh**, non-, no audits. **Um**, it was really an interesting, **uh**, workshop. Very interesting topic.

The number of hesitations within each interpretation varied; however, the use of "uh," and "um" were clearly utilized more often than other hesitations (see Figure 2).



"uh"	"um"	"well"	"you know"
737	652	142	355

Figure 2
Frequency of Hesitations Among All Participants

It is not surprising to find that interpreters inserted "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations into their speech as they interpreted for the deaf job candidate. As noted earlier, the cognitive load required to perform simultaneous interpreting makes interpreters prone to using hesitations and fillers (Plevoets

& Defrancq, 2016). We were surprised, however, by the frequency of the use of these "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations. The median number of "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations across all 47 interpreters was 37, and the four interpreters who used the most "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations used them 115 times, 82 times, 73 times, and 70 times respectively. One interpreter said "uh" only once, and had no other "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations or "like" hesitations. This discrepancy in the number of disfluencies and hesitations between the interpreters who used the most and the one who used the least is further evidence that interpreters are adding these fillers and hesitations because of their own process of interpreting and not because of some cue in the language produced by the deaf job candidate.

As noted earlier, listeners who are not familiar with ASL-English interpreting expect that interpreters are maintaining both content and style in their interpretations (Feyne, 2015). Any "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" disfluencies noted by an interviewer who has not previously communicated with a deaf person through an ASL-English interpreter are likely to be attributed to the deaf person and not to the interpreter's process. Since "um," "uh," "well," and "you know" hesitations have been specifically identified as a type of speech that creates an unfavorable impression in interviews (see Parton et al., 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985), their noticeable predominance in most of the transcriptions of interview answers in our study suggests that the deaf job candidate is unlikely to make a favorable impression on an interviewer in an employment interview regardless of that candidate's skills, qualifications, or performance answering interview questions in ASL.

Conclusions

Deaf candidates participating in a phone screening employment interview have little agency over what English speech interpreters produce for them. Data suggests that interpreters vary significantly in the number of disfluencies and disfavored verbal behaviors that they produce. The interpreter who produced the most examples of "I think," "I guess," "I feel" qualifiers; "like" hesitations; and "uh," "um," "well," "you know" hesitations combined produced 127 instances in less than 8 minutes of speech. At the other end of the spectrum, the smallest number of examples of disfavored speech produced in a transcription was five. The deaf candidate who was connected via VRS with the interpreter who produced only five disfluencies in the interview would make a very different impression from the candidate who was connected with the interpreter who produced 127 disfluencies.

To better understand what impact the interpreter could have on the impressions made by the candidate based on the number of disfluencies that the interpreter produces, we can compare the differences in speech that interpreters produced while interpreting the same answer to an interview question produced in ASL. In response to the question "What accounting skills have you learned or refreshed recently?" one participant answered:

> **Well**, I went to a workshop recently. It was about two months ago. **Um**, focusing on auditing, and looking into the details. **Um**, **you know**, sort of finding random things that you audit and identify risk in a company's practices. **Um**, and how to solve risks and identifying, **like**, practices, **you know**, done by a corporation, their processes, and, and **uh**, how that all sort of leads to risk or lack of risk. And I think it's a really interesting topic.

The same ASL answer to the question elicited this English speech from another interpreter participant:

> About two months ago I attended a workshop on audits (pause) where I was trying to identify what factors were risky and to stop them, and learning to identify those certain behaviors in the accounting system. And I found that tremendously interesting. And that's a topic that I enjoyed, and find myself very interested in.

The crucial point to understand is that the content of both interpretations are correct and both are representing the same deaf job candidate. However, each interpreter would make a drastically different impression on a potential employer.

Discussion

While interpreter participants in this study are experienced and credentialed, they still produced a high rate of hesitancy interjections. From the data, we can predict that an interpreter would add anywhere from 36.9 to 52 total interjections to the interview. While statistically these predictions apply only to this particular job applicant, the lesson should be applied on a broader scale. Interpreters may not be aware of the number of times that they use hesitations or the impact of these hesitations on the impressions created of the deaf conversational participant. Arguably, interpreters should be better trained to avoid producing this type of speech or at least made aware of the impact of hesitations on the impression of deaf people. Additionally, given the increase in the number of employees working from home as a result of the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that we continue to explore interpreting via video. Future studies must further examine the factors that lead to the use of hesitations and hedging (e.g., technology, training, experience). Additionally, people interacting with members of the deaf community through ASL-English interpreters must be made aware that the speech produced by ASL-English interpreters is likely to include verbal characteristics that are not a direct representation of the language of the deaf ASL user. This awareness is particularly important for potential employers. The impression created by speech in an employment interview is used by employers both to determine a candidate's suitability for a particular job position and the candidate's fit with the organization. A poor impression created by a high rate of verbal disfluencies and qualifiers in the English speech of an ASL-English interpreter may lead an employer to conclude that the deaf person is not the best candidate for a particular job and, more importantly, not a good fit for any position within that employer's organization. Combined with other barriers to employment deaf candidates face because of stereotypes regarding deafness and disability, the employment prospects among the non-deaf population for educated and qualified deaf job candidates seem grim. Future scholarship should strengthen the findings from this initial study to promote awareness of the challenges deaf candidates face when striving to create a favorable impression in an interview that includes an ASL-English interpreter.

Members of the deaf community are achieving more access to quality higher education than ever before. Like anyone, a deaf job candidate seeks to get a foot in the door of the world of paid work to earn financial security and the dignity that comes from being among the employed population. However, doors can be closed for deaf candidates not because of their qualifications or even because of their performance in an interview, but because the English speech that is produced for them by an ASL-English interpreter does not conform to expectations of how a "good" employee sounds. While this study hopes to generate a wider dialogue about what identities are welcome at work, it is equally important to initiate discussion about the influence that interpreters have on the lives of the deaf people for whom they interpret. Interpreters must be keenly aware of the influence that their linguistic decisions have on the impressions of deaf people in high-stakes environments such as employment interviews. The starting place for this knowledge is interpreter education.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What made you apply for this Accounting Analyst position?
3. How would you describe your work style?
4. What is a typical day like at your current job?
5. Can you tell me about a time when you did a particularly good job responding to the needs of a customer or coworker as part of your work? What did you do?
6. This position requires precise accuracy and attention to detail. Can you tell me about time when you did work that required a very high level of attention to detail?
7. How much experience do you have with general ledger? Can you describe your duties in your current or past jobs related to general ledger?
8. What accounting skills have you learned or refreshed recently?
9. Where do you see yourself in five years?
10. How do you see yourself contributing in this Accounting Analyst position?
11. What do you hope to get out of this job?