

Offended to Befriended: A Practitioner's Journey of Forgiveness

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An action research project submitted to

Western Oregon University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

March 2026

MASTER'S DEGREE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Completion Term: Spring 2026

Type of exit requirement: Action Research Project

The supervisory committee met with the candidate for a final evaluation in which all aspects of the candidate's program were reviewed. The committee's assessment and recommendations are:

Recommendations:

- ✓ Degree should be awarded

Recommendations:

- ✓ Exit Requirement has been approved
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God, for providing for all my needs; giving me the grace, mercy, and strength that made it possible for me to return to school, complete this research, and build and maintain many meaningful relationships along the way.

To my family – Mom, Grandma, Dad and Momma Audrey, Pete and Karen, Junior and Pearl Ann, and Joe and Liz for supporting me when I decided to go back to school in 2020, during a global pandemic, and at the age of 27, after getting divorced and leaving my high-earning career. You have all loved me, championed me, prayed for me, fed me, and supported me financially at various times in the last six years. I love you all and appreciate all you have done for me.

To my friends all over the country, I cannot express how deeply honored I am by your faithfulness and by how you have sown into my life in immeasurable ways. Specifically, the “Maui Crew,” my Tennessee community, and everyone in Oregon who bid me farewell as I packed up my car and ventured to live on the road for six months, eventually moving to Nashville, Tennessee.

I owe sincere thanks to those whose generosity afforded me the uninterrupted time necessary to complete this research in its final stages. The Matteson family, Joel Birch, Connor Clarke, Marissa Spencer, Brant Lapp, Kelly Moses, Paul and Hannah Vettrus, Andrew and Summer Brosig, and Anthony and Kennedy Aiello.

To my dearest friend, who encouraged me to think in this way – saying, “when I change, everything changes.”

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal relationships among practitioners are essential to professional development. Critical self-examination as an initial response to interpersonal conflict in the form of horizontal violence has received limited scholarly attention. Over a 12-month period of autoethnographic action research, I examined intrapersonal reflection and intentional interpersonal relationship building. I recorded Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) to process experiences during my first year of professional practice as an American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreter. I used a mixed-methods approach of data analysis. I conducted open coding on 18 TAP transcripts, identifying the following: *Facts*, *Thoughts*, *Feelings*, and *Choices* surrounding work-related events. Results of the thematic analysis, along with the coded data, were discussed in relation to the reviewed literature. Major findings discussed include the affirmation of my research question: Following an event I perceived as horizontal violence, could I reflect on my own experience and express desire to become friends with the perceived transgressor? Individuals who have experienced actual or perceived horizontal violence could benefit from engaging in metacognitive regulation and transformative learning practices.

Keywords: Horizontal violence, interpreting, metacognition, forgiveness, locus of control

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Navigating interpersonal conflict, and examining the beliefs individuals hold about themselves, others, and the circumstances under which relationships develop, can be revealing and transformative. In this study, I delve into these topics as I expand upon a problem within the practice profession of American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreting, though this problem can occur across many fields, anywhere interpersonal relationships exist. The purpose of the present research and the theoretical framework guiding the discussion of results and reviewed literature are described below. The limitations of this study are also discussed, but I first want to share why this research is close to my heart.

Background

In 2020, people were quarantined inside their homes due to a global pandemic. I felt quarantined inside my mind, believing that I was a victim and perceiving others as the proverbial villains. What I did not yet know was how my mental and emotional discomfort was connected to my unwillingness to forgive the people in my life who had caused me physical and psychological trauma. In both my personal and professional life, I have established and maintained interpersonal relationships and navigated the challenges that come along with them. Amid interpersonal conflict, I noticed undesirable reactions in both my body and my thoughts. I would feel my heart rate increase, I would perspire, my hands would shake, and my voice would tremble or worse; I opened my mouth and nothing would come out. I felt as though a million thoughts crossed my mind, mostly of how to end the discomfort as soon as possible and avoid it in the future. This often led to exhibiting people pleasing behaviors so to avoid confrontation,

which simultaneously increased the bitterness and apathy I felt toward others. I noticed myself becoming increasingly avoidant of people in general and frequently uttering the phrase “I hate people.” The longer this went on, the more I felt guilty and ashamed of the way I acted kindly to people while secretly judging their every decision. There came a point, I knew something had to change!

After a heartbreaking divorce near the end of 2019, I moved back to my hometown and with the support of a few new friends in 2020, I began a heart-healing journey. I was encouraged to begin by forgiving individuals who had hurt me. Doing so resulted in decreased feelings of resentment, increased desire to reconcile, and the ability to speak about the transgressors in a positive light. Simultaneously, 2020 was the year I decided to transform my life in another way. I went back to school to become an ASL-English interpreter; a dream I had as a little girl. I spent four years completing my undergraduate degree, and was then accepted into the Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies program at Western Oregon University where I was expected to complete field experience hours. This was exciting, but at the same time, fear of confrontation re-surfaced in this new and unfamiliar environment, especially when interpersonal conflict occurred. It felt natural to follow an old pattern of placing blame on someone else when I felt uncomfortable. To combat this, I decided to apply the same process of forgiveness I learned in my personal life to the professional realm, hoping to garner similar results.

Statement of the Problem

I began accepting job assignments in a few settings within which I felt comfortable functioning. However, one particularly uncomfortable interpersonal incident sent me into an anxious spiral. I continuously replayed the scene in my mind and noticed the familiar desire to

engage in avoidance behaviors. When I talked to trusted peers, my mentor, and classmates about my struggles, the topic of *horizontal violence* was mentioned. My situation was not an isolated incident. According to the *Psychosocial Hazards of Module 2: Work-Related Risks and Hazards*, on the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) website, “lateral” or “horizontal” violence “frequently occurs as verbal and emotional abuse that is unfair, offensive, vindictive, and/or humiliating, and includes bullying” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022). For this study, the phrase *actual or perceived horizontal violence* acknowledges that lived experiences are interpreted subjectively and shaped by individual perception. Identification and documentation of horizontal violence in the interpreting field began while researching intergenerational communications (Ott, 2012). Interpreters have felt unsafe and are unwilling to work with certain other interpreters, resulting in fewer options when forming teams of interpreters, a requirement of some job assignments. Herein lies a problem for the communities served by ASL-English interpreters.

Purpose of the Study

With this present study, I want to empower practitioners, professionals, and individuals in general by demonstrating personal growth through accountability of my thoughts, choices and actions in interpersonal relationships. I hope to bring more awareness to the power of forgiveness. It is well known how choosing to forgive does not mean the words or actions of another person were acceptable. Maya Angelou (2013) famously said when a person chooses to forgive, “it relieves you... you are relieved of carrying that burden of resentment.” Despite the history of concerning interpersonal communication in the field (Ott, 2012), I endeavor to see interpreters be willing and able to work collegially with any other interpreter. I will use

neuropsychological explanations to demonstrate how and why someone may perceive an act of horizontal violence. Then, instead of placing blame on someone else or the field for being toxic, I implore interpreters to look inward and change their beliefs about themselves, others, and situations. This study addresses the following research question: Following an event I perceived as horizontal violence, could I reflect on my own experience and express desire to become friends with the perceived transgressor?

Theoretical Framework

To guide the discussion of the reviewed literature and the results of the present study, I utilized the Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow 2000). Mezirow described the importance of considering the assumptions of others when engaging in collaborative problem solving. Awareness of the assumptions one makes can create opportunities to adapt to changes and transform frames of reference. The full framework was condensed to three guideposts for learning transformation: awareness and assessment of assumptions, awareness of alternative frames of reference, and collaboration with others to make decisions in the face of contested beliefs.

Limitations of the Study

Autoethnographic research is not easily replicable, and the findings of this study are not intended to be generalizable because everyone who experiences actual or perceived horizontal violence will respond and react differently. The intent for this study was to offer insight from the thematic analysis and reviewed literature. As the sole researcher, participant, coder and analyzer,

my personality, and tendencies (such as trait forgiveness) could influence outcomes. It is possible the results of this study were due to other variables aside from my documented choices to forgive and engage in intentional relationship building activities.

Organization

With this study of my intentional efforts in cognition and behavioral change, I desire to bring hope to those who have experienced similar work-place incidents perceived to be acts of horizontal violence. In the following chapters, I begin by offering a thematic review of literature featuring a brief history of horizontal violence, current research to support potential paths for mitigating its negative effects, reasons offense may be triggered, and options for personal response. Next, the methodology used to conduct the present study is explained in detail, including each step of data collection, storage, and analysis to allow for research replication. The results of the quantitative and thematic data analysis are presented with visual aids, followed by discussion of the results compared against the reviewed literature. Last, the implications of this research and my recommendations are shared in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to the 1960s, American Sign Language (ASL)-English interpreting needs were primarily met by friends or family members of a Deaf individuals on a volunteer basis. This was known as the Helper Model (Roberson, 2018). Over time, the boundaries of the interpreter's role became unclear. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) was established in 1964 and is widely considered to have marked the start of professionalization in the field (Ball, 2013). At times, an interpreter practitioner may work alone, or in teams of two or more interpreters depending on the requirements of the assignment; this is called team interpreting or teaming. Teaming requires a measure of trust between the interpreters with the goal of creating one interpretation, capitalizing on each other's strengths, and providing mutual support to ensure consistency and success (Russell, 2011). These interpersonal relationships can be both encouraging and discouraging due to a variety of factors. When interpreters experience horizontal violence the results include psychological damage, damage to interpersonal relationships, decreased work performance, decreased overall well-being, and low self-worth (Ott, 2012). For this study, feelings associated with being offended, avoidance behaviors, and options for personal response will be examined. While it is possible to avoid the practice of teaming as an interpreter, the experience of receiving feedback from others which could be perceived as negative is an inevitable part of personal and professional life.

Purpose of the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to explore topics pertaining to the present study and build on the foundation of existing research related to the topic of horizontal violence in the

interpreting field by adding an autoethnographic perspective. This review also addresses an identified gap in literature. Current literature has attended primarily to awareness of and experiences of horizontal violence, prevalence, forms and perceived causes, and occupational safety solutions to horizontal violence in the interpreting field (Comerford, 2023; Hill, 2018; Miller, 2023; Roman et al., 2024). Research in nursing pertaining to horizontal violence has focused primarily on prevalence, prevention, and organizational interventions. Due to the limited research available in the interpreting field, this literature review focuses on the research within the academic disciplines of neuroscience and psychology and the professional practices of nursing and counseling. Developing as an individual, considering why others think or do things the way they do, and setting personal and professional goals is applicable to every person in every walk of life. “One might correlate these processes with learning, unlearning, long-term memory or behavioral change and habits. This is relevant for health but also for learning, particularly transformative learning” (Le Pertel et al., 2020, p. 808). Navigating from what may contribute to an initial triggering event, to making progress toward desired outcomes will be apparent in this review.

Effects of Horizontal Violence

The philosophical origin of the concept of horizontal violence was in a book by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator in 1968, translated to English in 1970, called “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (Freire, 1970). Although this was not the focus of her study, Emily Ott (2012) was the first to identify phenomenon of horizontal violence in the field in ASL-English interpreting. Ott interviewed interpreters and found a concerning culture of horizontal violence where novice interpreters experience the perception of transgressions at the hands of more experienced

interpreters. When a transgression is perceived, the body may respond in subconscious ways. Inside the brain, the amygdala detects and responds to actual or perceived threats (LeDoux, 2003), and interacts with the hippocampus, enhancing long-term memory formation of the emotional event (Cahill & McGaugh, 1998). Thoughts may begin to rush through the mind, resulting in cognitive evaluations that leave a negative impression of the motives, intent, and character of the transgressor. Ochsner and Gross (2005) called this examination of the event emotional appraisal, and reappraisal. More awareness of these thoughts can begin when they take a turn for the worse and become excessively negative and hopeless, also known as catastrophizing (Sullivan et al., 1995). The impact does not stop there.

Behavioral changes may also occur following actual or perceived horizontal violence. An individual can experience emotional regulation in the form of distancing, actively looking at the situation from a different perspective so it feels less upsetting (Powers and LaBar, 2019). When speaking about the event, an indication of a cognitive bias being formed is the use of actor-observer asymmetry during story retelling (Jones and Nisbett, 2017, as cited by Malle, 2006). Malle's (2006) meta-analysis explained actor-observer asymmetry as the tendency for an individual to give an external, situation related attribution to their own actions, while assigning internal, character-related attributions to the actions of others. An individual can form a self-serving bias, (Mezulis et al., 2004) thinking of themselves as morally or socially superior to the transgressor.

Although it is possible to successfully avoid a specific colleague, especially in the case of a freelance interpreter, the potential of working alongside or even casually bumping into the transgressor in the future must be considered. Again, the amygdala plays a role in conditioning and re-conditioning the brain with fear as a response to the potential threat (Kim & Jung, 2006).

Each anticipated or actual interaction with the transgressor can result in re-experiencing (Ehlers et al., 2004) the initial event of actual or perceived horizontal violence, a well-known symptom associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), further reinforcing previously mentioned cognitive and behavioral processes. Conversely, post-transgression responses could include a desire to maintain a collegial relationship with the transgressor. Whether or not an individual possesses the knowledge, skills, or experience to obtain such an outcome, one place to start is found in the realm of metacognition - colloquially known as thinking about your thinking.

Metacognition

To summarize the seminal work of the developmental psychologist Flavell (1971), metacognition is the knowledge and regulation of one's own cognitive processes. Flavell also presented the concept of metacognitive regulation to be an interaction of the following four components: "(a) metacognitive knowledge, (b) metacognitive experiences, (c) goals (or tasks), and (d) actions (or strategies)" (p. 906). Stored knowledge and other antecedents, "significant events, conditions, and traits of one's earlier life" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) are indicators of cognitive and behavioral outcomes later in life. Upon awareness of anti-social or self-harming maladaptive traits, an individual can engage in critical self-examination, intent on discovering potential causes of such outcomes. Then, intervention strategies including goal setting and the practice of forgiveness can promote mitigation of undesirable traits.

Antecedents

There are contributing factors that exist in the background of our awareness, influencing the perception of threats, including horizontal violence. It is possible to be fully conscious of prior trauma which formed current triggers, but both trauma and triggers can be held subconsciously (just below cognitive awareness) or unconsciously. Substantial research supports the idea of childhood trauma leading to mental health conditions in adulthood (McKay et al., 2021), including anxiety, depression, and maladaptive behaviors. Life experiences, not reason, form belief systems “the stories we tell ourselves to define our personal sense of reality” (Uso-Domenech & Nescolarde-Selva, 2016, p. 148). Belief systems are innumerable and incredibly complex, but one relevant to the present study is a victim mentality, more specifically as it pertains to the workforce. According to Danziger, (2010) the victim mentality occurs when professionals believe they are overworked, underappreciated, or misunderstood and lack the training, support, or resources they need to fulfill the demands of the job.

Dean and Pollard’s (2013) publication of *The Demand Control Schema* focuses on interpreting, but professionals and practitioners across many fields encounter demands of their environment, of interpersonal encounters and of their intrapersonal (internal) world. Practitioners may experience a combination of the many phenomena under the umbrella of cognitive distortion. One example is self-discrepancy, a discrepancy between one’s perceived self and actual self (Higgins, 1987). Also, “cognitive dissonance occurs whenever an individual simultaneously holds two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent” (Aronson, 1969, p. 2). An individual can begin forming a psychological contract, where they set expectations for others to abide by, which they believe to be obviously implied, oftentimes without

communication of these expectations (Bankins, 2015). An individual may find themselves aware of such antecedents, and desire to experience different cognitive and behavioral outcomes.

Interventions

The goal of experiencing different outcomes when exposed to similar stimuli is pursued through interventions, “generally, any action intended to interfere with and stop or modify a process, as in treatment undertaken to halt, manage, or alter the course of the pathological process of a disease or disorder” (American Psychological Association, n.d.). The practice of mindfulness increases awareness of the need for interventions, although Brown and Ryan stated, “most everyone has the capacity to attend and to be aware” and this capacity varies over time because of being “sharpened or dulled by a variety of factors” (2003, p. 822). To counteract the previously identified victim mentality, individuals can choose to adopt a growth mentality or what Dweck and Leggett (1988) referred to as “the mastery-oriented pattern... the seeking of challenging tasks and the maintenance of effective striving under failure” (p. 256). Other intervention options include having a conversation with the transgressor, processing the transgression during therapy, and keeping a personal journal. Although the initial purpose of their study was to present how writing about the benefits of interpersonal conflict could lead to forgiveness, McCullough et al. (2006) instead found how the “benefit-finding writing task was... encouraging cognitive processing of the transgression” (p. 894). Study participants wrote down the benefits they experienced, post-transgression. “They [participants] experienced reductions in avoidance versus benevolence motivation and reductions in revenge motivation—the motivations underlying forgiveness” (McCullough et al., 2006, p. 894). These findings present a

viable outlet for expressing oneself post-transgression and can be considered an option following the occurrence of actual or perceived horizontal violence.

Counseling and therapy are well-known interventions, conducted individually or in group settings. Research on outcomes of a type of group therapy called Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT), Maynard et al., (2023) reported that some participants experienced an “increased ability to understand the context in which transgressions occurred [which] promoted the necessary empathy and perspective for forgiveness and self-forgiveness to occur” (p. 273). This study also resulted in “ten participants reporting a greater capacity for emotional regulation as a result of becoming more emotionally aware and grateful” (p. 274). In practice professions, gathering with colleagues in a structured setting to discuss the work is called many things including oversight, supervision, reflective practice or case conferencing. This meeting is an opportunity for a practitioner to share details of their situation or “case” with trusted individuals who all participate under the agreement of respect for confidentiality and support of the person sharing their case (Dean & Pollard, 2013, pp. 139 - 149). In the interpreting field, the demand-control schema can be utilized as a guide for that meeting, and participants offer the case-giver non-judgmental suggestions for courses of action. In pursuing modification of cognitive and behavioral outcomes, a practitioner may implement interventions. Setting goals can clarify and stabilize the trajectory of interventions.

Goal Setting

While some goals are set automatically, through biology, with the intent of survival of an organism (Locke & Latham, 2013), other goals must be defined consciously. A professional may recognize the necessity of accountability and set their goal to accept responsibility for their

thoughts, choices and actions, which Cornish and Wade (2015) presented as the first step toward self-forgiveness, leading to personal growth and improved well-being. A meta-analysis of goal setting found how behavior change is highly motivated when goals are specific and difficult (Epton et al., 2017). Behavior change is often preceded by shifts in attitudes stemming from underlying beliefs which correspond to the identified undesirable behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). This correspondence may include beliefs impacting behaviors relating to the self, others, and situations.

A specific and difficult goal for a practitioner could be to experience reconciliation in interpersonal relationships through self-reflection, practicing humility, self-forgiveness and choosing to forgive those who have committed transgressions against them. This could be especially difficult if these behaviors do not align with the practitioner's conditioned tendencies. Worthington's publication of *The Science of Forgiveness* (2020) explained how a person with a forgiving personality tends to exhibit more humility and tends to be more extroverted, potentially because of a greater sense of importance placed on interpersonal relationships by those who lean more toward extroversion (p. 30). Before choosing to forgive, an individual must acknowledge a wrongdoing; acknowledgement of the transgression could be an act of humility in itself. From the *Values Based Leadership* journal, Okpala and Caldwell (2019), expounded on humility through three pillars: Self-Awareness, Commitment to Learning, and Appreciation of Others. In action, this can look like metacognition and deciding to set intrapersonal and interpersonal goals.

Forgiveness

It is important to note that practicing forgiveness does not always imply reconciliation. The processes highlighted in the present study focus instead on the opportunity to re-wire the

brain post-transgression. Darsana et al. (2022) emphasized “It [forgiveness] is a choice made voluntarily by the forgiver” (p. 232). Masarykova et al. (2022) described forgiveness as a complex construct because it can be defined in numerous ways. Worthington and Scherer (2004) presented forgiveness in two distinctions: decisional and emotional. In an attempt to measure forgiveness, Rye et al. (2001) revealed a conundrum, in that “it is not clear whether individuals can make a meaningful distinction between how they would probably cope and how they would prefer to cope” (p. 262). After an event of actual or perceived horizontal violence, if the individual chooses to forgive and intends to treat the transgressor(s) in the same manner as prior to the event, this describes decisional forgiveness and can be a motivator for emotional forgiveness. Emotional forgiveness occurs when negative emotions are replaced with neutral or positive ones, possibly due to intentional repeated positive exposure to the transgressor (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). For example, spending time together outside of work means seeing them as safe in social settings and therefore potentially less threatening in work settings.

Once again, forgiveness does not automatically imply reconciliation with the transgressor must take place. For example, Freedman (1998) stated that most people do not realize there are multiple ways to practice forgiveness and made the distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation. She explains,

The following are four possible permutations of the two concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation:

1. Forgive and reconcile
2. Forgive and not reconcile
3. Not forgive and interact
4. Not forgive and not reconcile

After reviewing the literature, it seems as if the majority of people focus only on the first permutation, forgive and reconcile, and overlook the other three. Thus, most people automatically assume that reconciliation will occur when one forgives (Freedman, 1998, p. 205).

The presence or lack of an apology from the transgressor is another consideration when deciding to forgive. Witvliet's research said the presence of an apology and restitution reduced the experience of unforgiveness, anger, sadness, and fear (2020). It is possible the transgressor is unaware of the transgression, and it is the forgiver's choice to inform them or not. Interacting with the transgressor may not be possible or may feel unsafe. If the decision is made to foster an interpersonal relationship, the internal process of forgiveness can be completed with or without the transgressor's knowledge. Next, a practitioner can challenge themselves to shift such thoughts and attitudes in a productive, self-empowering direction.

Fostering Connection

Following an event of actual or perceived horizontal violence, fostering a connection with the person perceived as the transgressor may not seem possible. Forgiveness literature over the years has made it very clear that if eminent danger exists, the pursuit of relational reconciliation is not recommended. However, if the perceived lack of possibility stems from antecedents mentioned in this review, a world view, belief system, or a mentality – all these things can change. In *Daring Greatly*, Brené Brown reflects, “after 15 years of social work education, I was sure of one thing: Connections is why we're here; it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives” (2012, p. 253). By choosing to implement interventions, and shifting from an external locus of control – the belief that outcomes are mostly determined by external forces,

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such as chance, or fate, making personal actions less relevant, to an internal locus of control – the belief that outcomes are mostly determined by one’s own behavior, skills, or attributes, (Rotter, 1996) practitioners can make progress toward healthier interpersonal relationships.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

At the outset of this study, I intended to collect data with a broader scope than was manageable which required reconsideration of the scope and direction of my research. I decided not to document every time I felt offended, hurt, bullied, or belittled by any individual during the course of my work. Instead, I focused on my experience of, and reflections upon a work-place incident I perceived as horizontal violence and my personal growth which took place in the year after. This was an event where I initially claimed I was not offended. Over time, however, my repeated thoughts and urges to discuss the event led to my confession - I was offended. I did not want to remain in that state of offense though. Something had to change. From that point on, any time I thought about, or sought counsel regarding the event, I recorded a voice memo of my external processing session also known as a Think-Aloud Protocol (TAP; Ericsson & Schraw, 2005). Each recorded TAP captured my thoughts, feelings, and choices before, during, and after instances of thinking about, or discussing the event. My interpreter education program provided frequent exposure to the Demand Control Schema framework (DC-S; Dean & Pollard, 2013), therefore my TAP recordings include listing the various demands of the scenario, the control options I chose to implement, as well as other control options I did not utilize but which I documented for potential future use.

Research Design

All data were collected using the Voice Memo application on an iPhone to record TAPs. Raw audio files were stored on an iPhone until the end of the collection period, when I uploaded them to Google Drive and organized them with labels numbering one to 18. I stored TAP

transcripts which were either autogenerated by the Voice Memo application or typed by myself in a single Google Doc. I copied individual transcripts from the Google Doc and pasted them into a Google Spreadsheet, designating an individual row on the spreadsheet for an individual TAP transcript. I repeated this step of copying transcripts and pasting them into an Excel spreadsheet where they would remain as stored, raw data. I completed data analysis and created charts to display the quantitative data results within Google Spreadsheets. Google Drawings is where I created a thematic map to display the results of my qualitative data analysis. The goal of this study was to explore how my own perceptions and decision-making processes evolved following an interpersonal conflict and discover whether those processes could support the development of genuine friendships. I used excerpts from my TAPs in the discussion of thematic data results.

Researcher Positionality

Research was conducted on my own professional practice during my first year of working as an ASL-English interpreter. The data consisted of self-generated Think-Aloud Protocol (TAP) recordings. I served as both the researcher and the sole participant. The dataset consists exclusively of my own cognitive and emotional processing recorded during the study period.

Data Analysis

I used a mixed-methods approach to data analysis. While coding quantitative data, I noted challenges in a notebook as I encountered them. Using an open coding method (Glaser et al.,

1968), I made decisions about how I would code as I went, which I also noted and referenced to guide my analysis. I also completed a thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2022) to organize emerging themes which offered insight into meaning within the data. A few data segments (approximately 2% of the dataset) did not fit neatly into any available categories and were excluded from quantitative coding to preserve consistency in category definitions. These data segments were, however, retained in the dataset and considered in thematic analysis. I outline each phase of my data analysis below.

Transcribing

An Excel spreadsheet was created to store all the raw data – transcripts of 18 audio files gathered between January 2025 and January 2026. A Google spreadsheet was created, and this was where all data were analyzed. On both spreadsheets I created column headings of: *Date of Recording, Title of Recording, Transcript, Thoughts, Feelings, Choices, and Facts*. I typed transcripts for voice recordings which did not have a generated transcript. After an update of the iOS operating system was completed in March 2025, all audio files had transcripts provided by the Voice Memo application. I reviewed those transcripts for accuracy and made changes to the words which I knew had been misinterpreted by the application. Then, each of the 18 transcripts were reviewed for accuracy; grammar and punctuation errors were corrected. I decided filler words like *um, and, and so* would be retained in case of change in use frequency from which insight could be made. I made note of when the TAP was recorded on a specific date, but I was recounting events which occurred on a previous date. First, I read through each transcript and considered how I wanted to analyze the present data. As I noticed patterns, I began phase two of

analysis. To enhance analytical rigor, I documented coding decisions throughout the analysis process, and patterns were reviewed multiple times across transcripts.

Quantitative Coding

I read through one TAP transcript at a time, extracting sentences, or segments of sentences, and using the cut and paste function, physically placing them into one of the four columns in the spreadsheet: *Thoughts*, *Feelings*, *Choices*, or *Facts*. Statements were categorized as *Thoughts* when they reflected cognitive processing such as remembering or evaluating an event, often including phrases such as: “I thought...,” “I was thinking...,” “I remembered...,” “I realized...,” or similar expressions. Statements were categorized as *Feelings* when they reflected emotional processing, often including phrases such as: “I felt like...,” “I was feeling...,” or contained words like: “nervous,” “excited,” “grateful,” “uncomfortable,” or similar expressions. Statements were categorized as *Choices* when they reflected decision-making processes, often including phrases such as: “I chose to...,” “I decided...,” “I ended up...,” or similar expressions. Statements were categorized as *Facts* when they were determined to be objective descriptions of events or circumstances referenced in the TAP, including details of physical surroundings.

For the next step of analysis, I decided to focus on data coded as *Thoughts*. I read each extracted item, determined where it fit in one of three subcategories and color coded each by the following rules: Thoughts about *Myself* were changed to pink text; *Others*, blue text; and the *Situation*, orange text. I noticed, while listening to my TAP recordings, I tended to speak in a lot of run-on sentences, whereas if I were typing or writing, the thoughts would be more distinctly complete. To bring clarity, I determined if the subject of my thought was a situation or a person,

but it led me to think something about myself, I divided the thought segments with as much specificity as possible and color coded accordingly. A single word “that” was color coded orange because it was in reference to the situation.

The *Feelings* category was color coded next. Again, I read each extracted item, determined where it fit in one of two subcategories and color-coded each by the following rules: Feelings I determined were based in *Dread*, because of expressions of discomfort, fear, or something to that effect were changed to red text. Feelings I determined were based in *Hope*, because of expressions of comfort, excitement, or something to that effect were changed to green text. After changing the text color, I selected the feeling word, like “nervous,” “uncomfortable,” “apprehensive” or “proud,” “nice,” and “better,” and changed the font style to bold. Some feelings were not as easily identifiable by keywords, so I looked at the surrounding context. For example, in the context of the word “struggling,” I was struggling with feeling like I was forcing myself to engage in friendship building behaviors. I decided this was an indicator of hope, and I coded it green. Beyond individual words, phrases such as “benefit from” and “can grow” were coded green. Feelings which did not fit into either category were not given a code and maintained standard black text.

In the *Choices* category, I repeated the same initial step of reading each extracted item and determined where it fit in one of three sub-categories. I color coded each item by the following rules: Choices made prior to work-related events were changed to yellow text; during work-related events, purple text; after or “post” work-related events, white text. Much of this coding was straight forward. There was one instance of a comment being made following a work-related event, but the context of the comment was a choice made prior to the event. I coded it as yellow.

OFFENDED TO BEFRIENDED

I decided the transcript segments which were categorized as *Facts* would not be coded in the quantitative analysis as they were objective and would be more useful to analyze in the thematic analysis. I then completed the process of finding the percentage of each occurrence of a sub-category item within each category. Beginning with the earliest transcript, under the *Thoughts* category, I counted the total number of occurrences of each sub-category. See row one and row 18 below as examples:

Row 1.) Totals – *Others* = 2, *Myself* = 1 *Situation* = 0, Total = 3

Cumulative Totals – *Others* = 2, *Myself* = 1 *Situation* = 0, Total = 3

Row 18.) Totals - *Others* = 1, *Myself* = 3, *Situation* = 3, Total = 7

Cumulative Totals - *Others* = 33, *Myself* = 64, *Situation* = 56, Total = 153

I repeated this step in each row until all 18 rows included the row totals and cumulative totals. Below the last row, I calculated and documented the percentage of thoughts about others as compared to the total number of thoughts. I repeated this for the thoughts about myself and about the situation. This same method was used to find the total number of feelings based in hope and based in dread for all 18 rows. Again, below the last row, I calculated and documented the percentage of feelings based in both hope and dread as compared to the total number of feelings. I treated the choices in the same manner, calculating and documenting the percentage of choices made prior to, during, and after a work-related event as compared to the total number of choices.

Thematic Analysis

I created a new Google spreadsheet for the thematic analysis and created four columns with the headings: *Date of Recording*, *Title of Recording*, *Notes During Analysis*, and *Emerging*

Themes. I then used the copy and paste function to bring the raw data of the 18 TAPs from the Excel spreadsheet to the Google spreadsheet. Just as I had done in the quantitative data analysis, I made notes when the TAP was recorded on a specific date, but I was recounting events which occurred on a previous date. There is a gap of five months in which no data were collected, and I noted this as well because of its possible contribution to the emergence of themes following the gap in time. In the *Notes During Recording* column, on all 18 rows, I repeated the same questions for myself to keep in mind as I listened to each TAP: What stands out? Shifts in tone, language, or awareness? Emotional or relational turning points? These guiding questions helped me identify statements most relevant to the research question. When I heard something that answered one of the three questions, I paused the recording, and in the *Emerging Themes* column, I recorded the timestamp and noted what I had observed. This process was repeated while listening to each TAP.

During the analysis process, I thought of concepts from relevant literature I had researched. If I thought they may be helpful to forming connections in the data, I added a note next to the time stamp under the *Emerging Themes* column, placed it in parentheses, and changed the text to the color red. In a concurrent round of analysis, a column was added to the spreadsheet, titled *Themes*. In this column, along each row, I typed a consolidation of notes from the *Emerging Themes* column. From there, I began comprising a thematic map (Byrne, 2022) to present my findings. I wrote each identified theme, sub-theme, and keywords from the data on sticky notes and arranged them on a table. The concepts I viewed as main themes, I wrote on full size, bright blue sticky notes; sub-themes and keywords I wrote on half-size light blue sticky notes. I scrutinized words and phrases for their value as a theme and made decisions as to whether certain concepts were keywords or supporting ideas rather than themes and thus

integrated into themes or sub-themes. I arranged themes spatially to reflect conceptual relationships and as I saw opportunities for reconfiguration, I adjusted the sticky notes until I felt the map was ready to be created digitally.

The first identified theme was Perceived Horizontal Violence as this described the initial triggering event, setting the entire study in motion. Emotional Conditioning became the only sub-theme to capture the phenomenon of when I was re-playing the event of perceived horizontal violence in my mind and experienced symptoms of being re-triggered. What I noticed during the process of further theme identification was how most of the concepts I thought were main themes, were sub-themes of two main themes: Metacognition and Goals; both surrounded by a large cluster of related concepts. I recognized all the sticky notes branching from the Goals theme could be placed into two sub-themes of Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal, as they largely related to my relationships with others or my own thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. In the data, I saw a frequency of verbalizing what could have contributed to, and what directly followed the triggering event. Therefore, Awareness of Antecedents, and Awareness of Undesirable Reactions emerged as sub-themes; both falling under the umbrella of Metacognitive Knowledge. Expressed with similar frequency in the data were intentional steps I took to mitigate undesirable reactions, and reflections on personal growth. Interventions, and Monitor for Evidence of Progress toward Goals became the next two sub-themes of Metacognition under the umbrella of Metacognitive Regulation.

As I stood and looked at what felt like the final version of my thematic map, I felt something was missing. Something I saw repeatedly in the data was how I would verbalize my beliefs about myself, others, and the situation and, over time, the data showed lesser mention of how I was being impacted by such beliefs and greater mentions of how I could influence others

and the situation. Therefore, Locus of Control Shifting from External to Internal emerged as an additional theme. This could have been made a sub-theme of either Metacognition or Goals, but I felt because of its weighty contribution to the overall study, it should be a theme on its own. I decided to physically place this sticky note in the crux of Awareness of Undesirable Reactions and Interventions, two steps of Metacognition which pointed ultimately to the theme of Goals.

As both the researcher and subject of the research, analyzing my own voice recordings presented both advantages and challenges but I was uniquely positioned to access the cognitive processes underlying my experiences. This dual role required ongoing reflexivity during analysis. I addressed this by revisiting certain parts of the TAP recordings numerous times, listening to slight changes in my tone and rate of speech if perhaps it were an indication of specific cognitive processes. To ensure transparency throughout the analysis process, I took detailed notes, documenting each time I made an analytical decision. When I did not know a succinct term to describe a phenomenon I observed in the data, I would research within the academic discipline of psychology or neuroscience or both.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of my mixed-method data analysis, guided by my research question and the theoretical frameworks mentioned in Chapter 1. The results are presented according to themes identified during analysis. The data is presented without interpretation. In Figures 1, 2, and 3, along the X-axis, the month representing the most TAP recordings is April. This reflects a data collection event, wherein the raw data indicates seven TAPs were recorded on a single date in April, and recounted events which occurred on previous dates but were not verbally processed in a TAP until the recorded date. This recounting of events from previous dates did not seem to have impact on the results of the quantitative data analysis, but its possible impact on the results of the thematic analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

Quantitative Analysis Results

Although 18 TAPs comprised the entire dataset, not all 18 included a recounting of all categories nor their subcategories resulting in fewer than 18 data points are presented across the three quantitative categories analyzed. Results of the thematic analysis are presented following Figure 3 and contributed, with greater impact, to the discussion and recommendations of this study.

Figure 1

Topics of Thought in TAPs

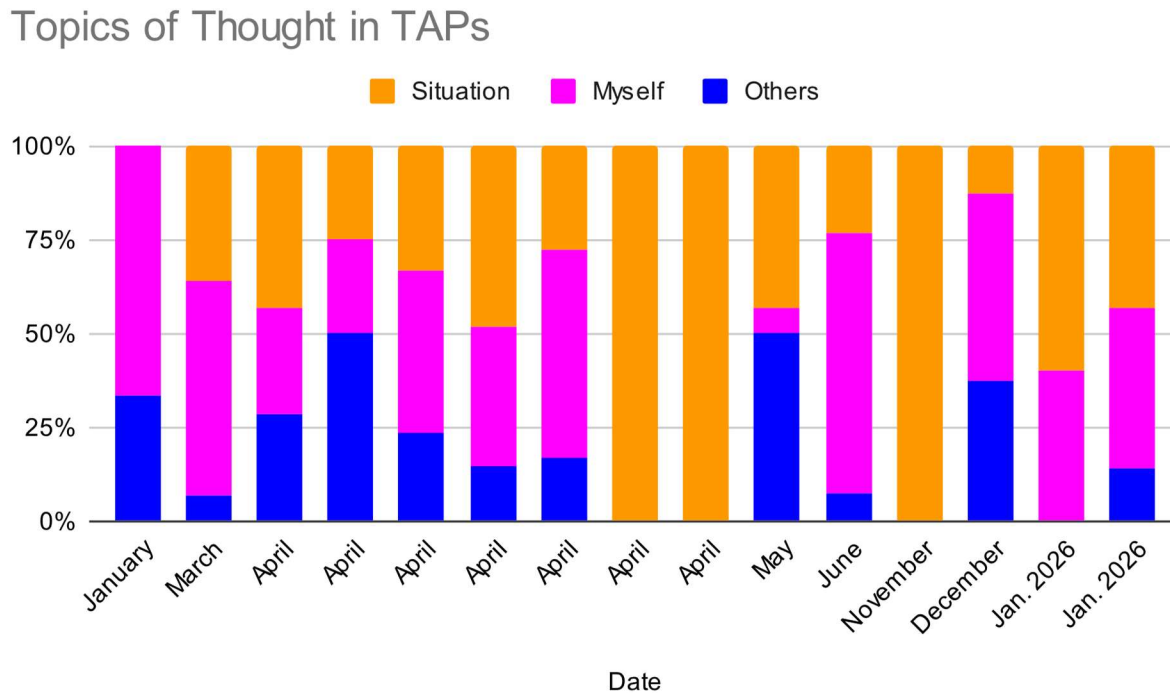


Figure 1 presents the distribution of three selected topics of thought during analysis of my voice recorded think-aloud protocols (TAPs) collected between January 2025 to January 2026. The stacked columns show the percentage of statements coded as *Thoughts* about the general *Situation*, *Myself*, and *Others*. Across the presented dates, the relative proportion of each topic of thought varies. On three dates, thoughts about the situation comprised 100% of the distribution. On one date, no thoughts about the situation were coded in the TAP; statements about myself or others split the distribution, though not equally. All other dates present a fluctuation in the relative distribution of the three topics of thought throughout the year. Of the 18 dates when TAPs were recorded, 15 are included in this dataset; three are excluded because of their lack of statements coded as thoughts about one of the three sub-categories. The cumulative

distribution of coded topics across the 15 TAPs included thoughts about *Myself* accounting for 41.8% of the total distribution, followed by the *Situation* at 36.6%, and *Others* at 21.6%.

Figure 2

Feelings Expressed in TAPs

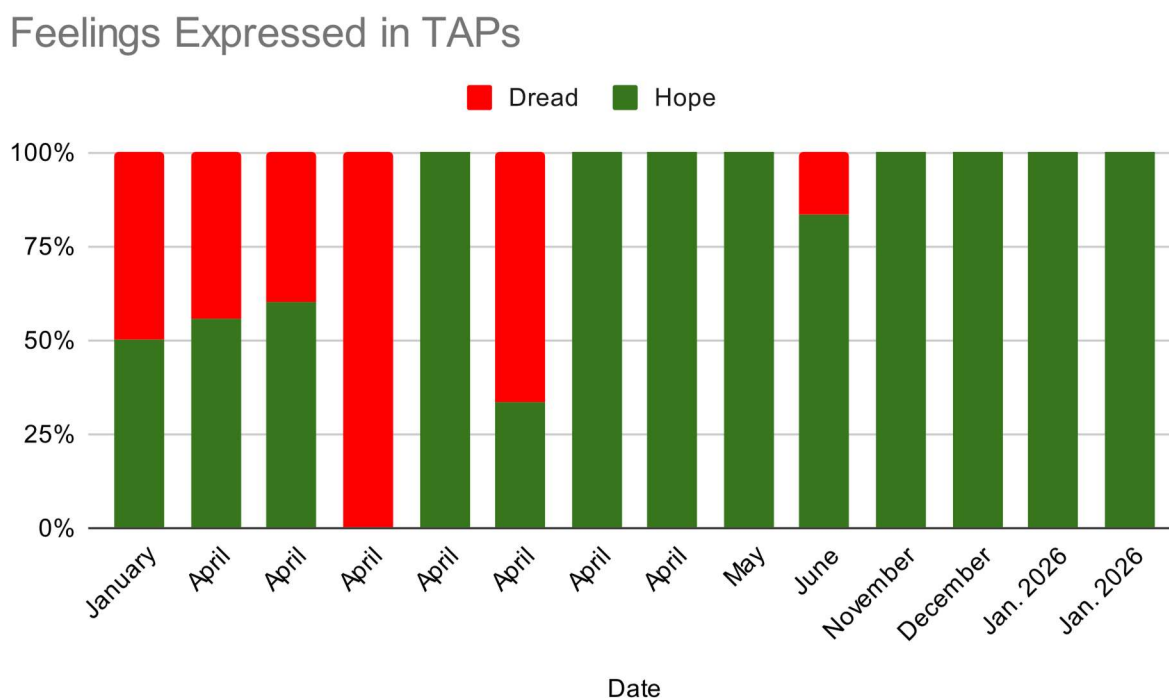


Figure 2 presents the distribution of two categories of expressed feelings identified during analysis of my voice recorded think-aloud protocols (TAPs) collected between January 2025 to January 2026. The stacked columns show the percentage of statements coded as feelings based in *Hope* and based in *Dread*. The first three dates in the dataset show approximately equal distribution of feelings coded as *Hope* and *Dread*, followed by one date of feelings of dread comprising 100% of the distribution. On eight of the 14 dates included in the dataset, expressed feelings based in hope comprise 100% of the distribution. In this dataset, four of the 18

collection dates are excluded because of their lack of statements coded as expressed feelings based on one of the two sub-categories. The cumulative distribution of coded expressed feelings across the 14 TAPs included feelings based in *Hope* accounting for 79.6% of the total distribution, followed by feelings based in *Dread* at 20.4%.

Figure 3

Choices Described in TAPs

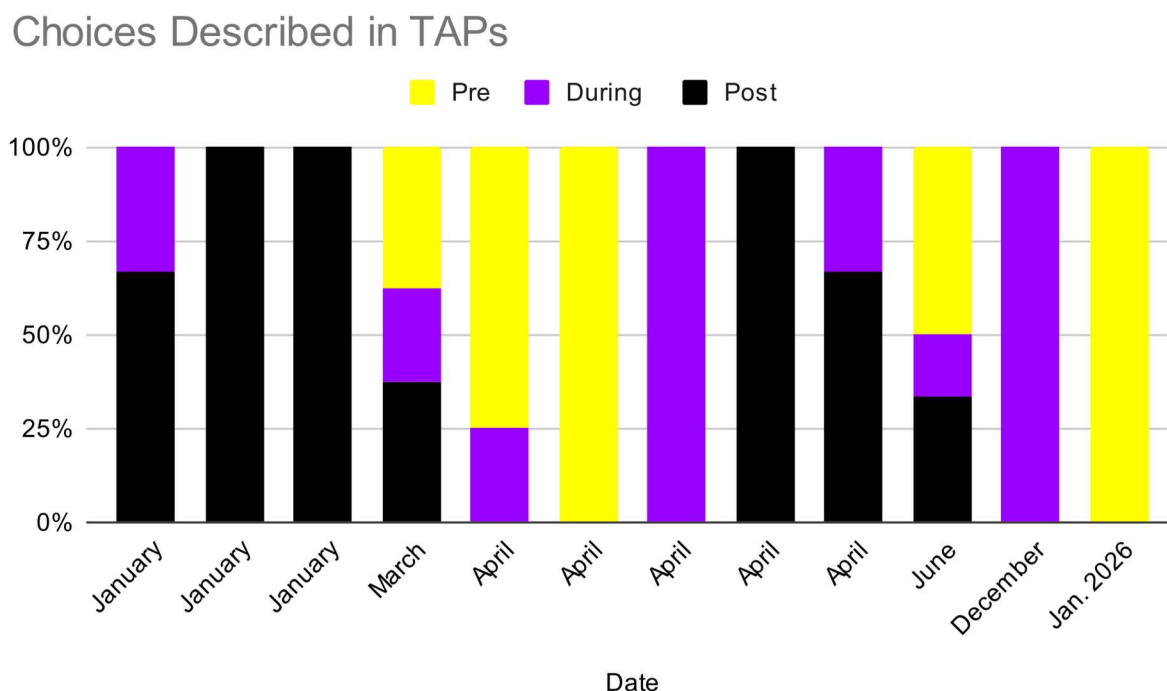


Figure 3 presents the distribution of three subcategories of choices surrounding work-related events identified during analysis of my voice recorded think-aloud protocols (TAPs) collected between January 2025 to January 2026. The stacked columns show the percentage of statements coded as choices made prior to, or *Pre*, *During* and, after, or *Post* work-related events. Across the presented dates, the relative proportion of subcategories of *Choices* varies. On three

dates, choices made post work-related events and verbalized in a TAP comprised 100% of the distribution. Two dates show a 100% distribution of recounted choices made during work-related events. A 100% distribution is shown again on two additional dates, regarding choices made prior to work-related events. On two of 12 dates in this dataset all three subcategories of choices are recounted in the TAPs. Of the 18 dates when TAPs were recorded, 12 are included in this dataset; six are excluded because of their lack of statements coded as *Choices* fitting one of the three sub-categories. The cumulative distribution of coded *Choices* surrounding work-related events across the 12 TAPs include *Choices* coded as *Post* accounting for 37.5% of the total distribution, followed by *During* at 35%, and *Pre* at 27.5%.

Thematic Analysis Results

In addition to the quantitative findings, this section contains a thematic map of several interconnected themes and sub-themes which emerged during the qualitative thematic analysis. A primary theme emerging from the data was a shift in my locus of control, from external to internal, a result of Metacognition and in support of my Goals, including sub-themes of Interpersonal and Intrapersonal.

Figure 4

A Thematic Map of Metacognition and Goal Development

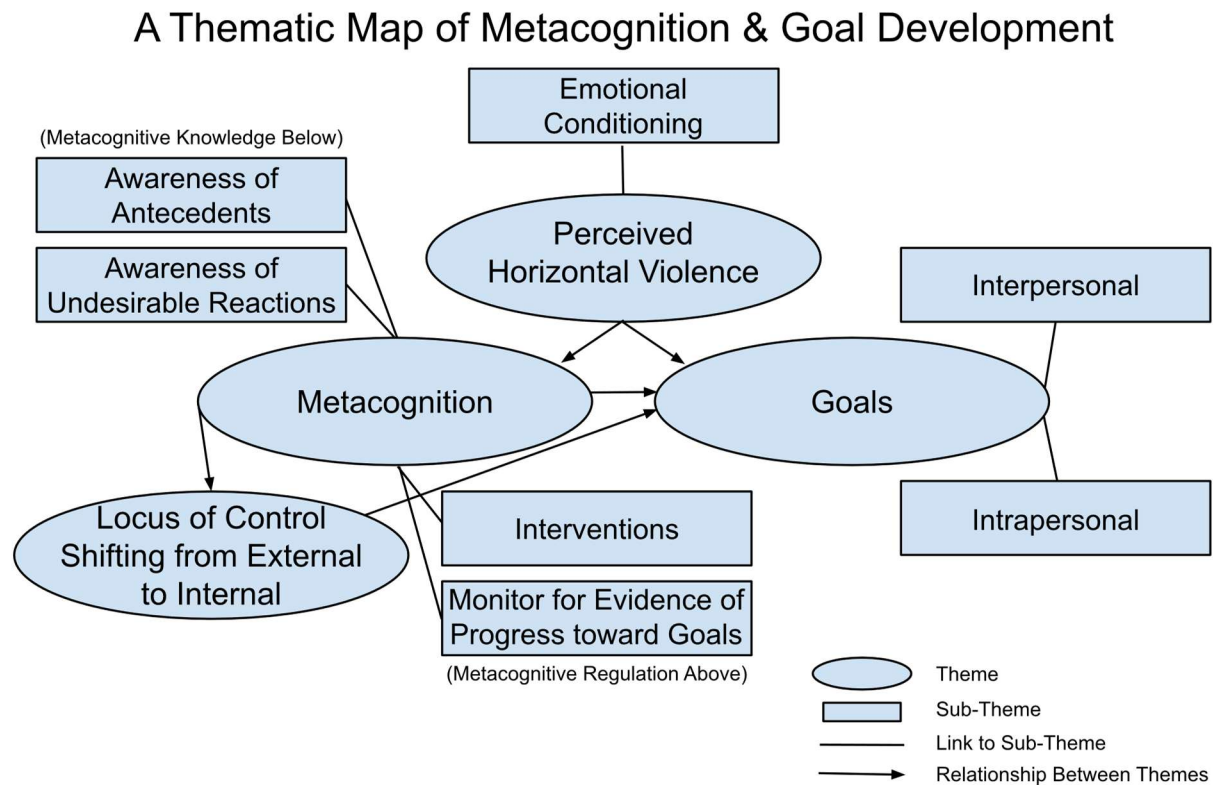


Figure 4 illustrates the interconnected main themes and sub-themes identified in the thematic analysis process. Centrally located, **Perceived Horizontal Violence** and its only sub-theme, **Emotional Conditioning**, highlighting the initial triggering event and subsequent re-triggering experiences. **Metacognition** and **Goals** are shown in direct relationship as they demonstrated the lens through which the event of horizontal violence was perceived, and the expectations of the future following horizontal violence, respectively. Connected to **Metacognition** as sub-themes, which fall into two categories: **Metacognitive Knowledge** - Awareness of Antecedents and Awareness of Undesirable Reactions, and **Metacognitive Regulation** - Monitor for Evidence of Progress toward Goals and Interventions.

Summary

Data collected between January 2025 and January 2026, in 18 TAPs were analyzed using a mixed-method data analysis, and the results were presented in this chapter. Quantitative results showed distributions which fluctuated across the topics of thought, feelings, and choices surrounding work-related events. Overall, the dataset indicated greater frequency of thoughts about *Myself* at 41.8%, followed by *Situation* at 36.6% and *Others* at 21.6%. *Hope* was the predominant expressed feeling in the dataset at 79.6%, and *Dread* being expressed 20.4% of the time. Choices coded as *Post* work-related events filled 37.5% of the dataset, *During* closely behind at 35% and 27.5% of choices made *Pre* work-related event were documented in the TAPs. Results of the thematic analysis emerged as interconnected themes of Perceived Horizontal Violence, Metacognition, Goals, and Locus of Control Shifting from External to Internal. The identified sub-themes and their connections to themes are presented in Figure 4 – *A Thematic Map of Metacognition and Goal Development*. Excerpts from TAPs, and relevant quantitative findings in the dataset are comparatively examined against the reviewed literature in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Based on the data from the present study and the reviewed literature, I propose that individuals who believe they have experienced horizontal violence can shift their perspective away from the transgressor and toward internal strategies for reframing their experience. Horizontal violence is not likely to cease any time soon. Since it is not possible to control other people, becoming more aware of one's capacity to control a personal response becomes increasingly valuable. To guide this discussion, the conceptual foundation of Perspective Transformation, (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow 2000) were condensed to three guideposts: Assumption Awareness, Redefinition of Frames of Reference, and collaboration with others to make decisions when beliefs are challenged, which I shortened to say Discourse and Recourse. Here, I compare literature based primarily in counseling, neuroscience, and psychology, expanding on the effects of and responses to actual or perceived horizontal violence against the empirical findings of this study, following my own experience of perceived horizontal violence. This chapter will conclude with unexpected and contradictory findings in the data and broader implications for the field of interpreting, specifically as it relates to collegial relationship development, and practitioner self-development.

Interpretation of Quantitative Findings

The open coding (Glaser et al., 1968) method allowed me to identify categories and subcategories as I reviewed the transcripts of each TAP in my quantitative analysis phase. In Figures 1, 2, and 3, I systematically excluded ambiguous, or uncategorizable data. The seven TAPs recorded on a single date in April, recounting events on previous dates were mentioned in

Chapter 4. This delay is an oversight which brought the potential of memory reconstruction challenges, reinforcement of self-serving bias, (Mezulis et al., 2004) and general shift in intensity of emotions. I believe this primarily impacted results of my thematic analysis but could have caused changes in frequency of mention of any of the quantitative variables. Aside from two TAPs in April and a TAP in November where the situation is the only thought topic, the fluctuation of coded *Thoughts* indicates a lack of rumination on one variable. Each of these three recordings were, however, less than two minutes in length. Only 21.6% of thoughts overall were about others, which seems to point to decreased likelihood of an external locus of control (Rotter, 1996).

Where I anticipated the greatest need for critique was in Figure 2, where I presented the feelings expressed in my TAPs. The feelings reported, and their interpretation are subjective, and I may have been experiencing subconscious selectivity of feelings to express. I may have placed greater attention on feelings that reflected growth, and in analysis, it is possible I coded and interpreted data in a way that created a researcher–participant bias. To decrease this bias during analysis, I created a structured coding scheme and was transparent about this process in the methodology chapter. With one exception, each expression of feelings based in dread is accompanied by hope. This disposition toward growth predates the present study; any future replications of this study with participants of various propensities may produce different results.

If while recording each TAP, I had been more intentional about completing a full breakdown of Dean and Pollard’s (2013) dialogic work analysis method, I would have documented many more choices that I made surrounding work-related events. Initially, my intentions were to collect data in the most authentic way I thought possible by not forcing myself into a structured verbal processing format. The choices which stood out in my mind as the most

relevant at the time were the ones I believe were verbalized. It is possible that choices which had impact on outcomes were made and not verbalized in the TAPs and therefore not included in the dataset to be analyzed. There are both positive and negative implications to either data collection method. In reflection, I felt dissonance between my deep involvement in the process of collecting data about my personal experiences and what seemed to be a detached method of analyzing the TAPs.

Assumption Awareness

In a TAP I recorded in the early stages of data collection, I was aware of and vocalized how my perceptions had influenced an experience which I had yet to identify as an incidence of perceived horizontal violence. I made a negative judgement about one of my first experiences of receiving feedback I perceived as negative. I described what I heard as an “elementary way of approaching the feedback,” and I later attributed this to the person’s character. I believed that I was being spoken to “like I was [a] child.” Immediately after, I considered my general tendency to “brace myself” when being offered feedback that I perceived as negative either in content or delivery - a conditioned response. This finding agrees with the work of Kim and Jung (2006) explaining how the brain keeps record of past perceptions of threat and the amygdala conditions a response of protection for future events of similar context. A few months later, I again expressed a negative judgement about work performance feedback I received and made an assumption that the feedback was “based on [their] beliefs.” Then, in a separate TAP, I rationalized how I did not want to be “offended” or “irritated” by this, indicating the reality that I was feeling those things at the time of the recording. When I assessed another persons’ behavior as being caused by internal reasons like their character or belief-system, while stating my

behavior was caused by external forces like past experiences, this reflects the actor-observer asymmetry described by Malle (2006).

In a TAP recounting one particular job assignment, I further observed myself assessing my work performance in a positive light, but I perceived the feedback offered to me about the same job assignment as overtly negative. This finding is in line with existing literature on cognitive dissonance (Aronson, 1969); I was dealing with two conflicting pieces of information simultaneously. Following a work-related event in the summer of 2025, I state in a TAP, “I was not nervous. I was not shaking. I was doing a lot better than I did the first time.” During analysis, I became aware that I had been considering all my previous work performances when assessing my work performance that day and I realized others who provide me with feedback can only take into account the work performance they have seen from me, which may only be one job assignment. I also noted in a TAP, the fact that “I hadn’t experienced getting feedback like that before.” In this situation, I had not given the person I teamed with that day any parameters for how I would prefer to receive feedback. Upon reflection, this was a mistake for which I needed to take personal accountability.

Another discovery of the thematic analysis was how I was unknowingly making psychological contracts with other individuals, of which they were unaware. I had been assuming my teammates would provide me with feedback in a specific way because of my belief in older, more experienced interpreters, always knowing how to provide detailed and supportive feedback. This assumption was reinforced by past experiences with older interpreters providing feedback in such a manner. This analysis reflects patterns in research by Bankins, (2015) where employees formed psychological contracts, (perceived obligations) of their employer, and how employees cope when that contract is violated without the employer’s knowledge. In a TAP recounting a

work-related event occurring approximately four months after the initial triggering event, I reasoned through a choice I had made. I stated, “in my brain, because of past experiences... I thought this was a solution to this problem.” I also expressed how I assumed the person teaming with me on that job assignment would thank me for making that choice. I felt feelings of offense bubble up in me again upon hearing feedback that I perceived as my teammate being ungrateful. In the proceeding TAPs, I processed the various reasons why I had made such assumptions about the feedback I would receive.

For the first six months of the year, approximately every TAP included a comment about how the demands of the job or personal demands impacted what I believed to be true at that time. For example, in January 2025 I highlighted, “making the choice to sign something that I very much did not agree with, and didn’t like signing,” as a contributing factor to my perception of the entire work-related event. In the same TAP, I went on to contemplate the choices I could have made following this experience including not working in that setting in the future and avoiding certain colleagues. As I became aware of the potential influence of a victim mentality, in a TAP in March 2025, I counteracted this by listing actions “I could have taken to not feel like a victim and feel empowered and know that I had done everything that I possibly could have done in order to be prepared.” Other internal demands captured in my TAPs included feelings of guilt, shame, and fear of rejection which may have been stemming from my past traumas. Processing of these emotional responses were expressed verbally in TAPs, but much processing was instead done with trusted individuals and counselors. During the thematic analysis phase, I arranged ideas and keywords on sticky notes in my thematic map, I placed each of these feelings in connection with the Awareness of Antecedents sub-theme under the umbrella of Metacognitive Knowledge, linked to the theme of Metacognition.

Redefinition of Frames of Reference

As I listened to myself externally process in each TAP, I kept hearing myself express desire for my actions and reactions to be different than what they were at the time. My goals were verbalized but I did not know exactly how I would achieve them. I sought to embrace humility as a guiding principle by taking accountability for my thought patterns, choices and actions. This practice of self-awareness is one of three pillars of humility identified in the *Values Based Leadership* journal I reviewed (Okpala and Caldwell, 2019). I wanted to change certain beliefs about myself, others and situations. Ultimately, I sought behavioral change. I perceived the only thing in my way was my current frame of reference.

I observed myself failing to realize I had been offended, stating in a TAP early in the data collection process, “I was not offended.” The results presented in Figure 3, however, indicate the majority of feelings based in dread were expressed in the three months following this particular TAP. In one of the TAPs in April 2025, I documented my exhibition of avoidance behaviors, saying “I was tempted to just leave [a work-related event],” when I knew a person who I felt offended by was present. Within TAPs on this same date, multiple times, I uttered “I choose to forgive [them].” Following this choice to forgive, I noted “I felt better about my interactions with [redacted], and I felt like I could work with [redacted] again in the future and not be offended.” During analysis, I considered how this shift of perspective was not a result of external forces. Rather, this outcome supports McCullough’s 2006 study on benefit-finding activities promoting forgiveness where participants reported experiencing less motivation to avoid and seek revenge upon a transgressor following the writing of perceived benefits from the interpersonal conflict. Instead of writing, I spoke about what had happened and brought my goals into the picture,

leading to forgiveness and desire to gain a better understanding of the individuals I interacted with during work-related events.

I began to express gratitude for the common practice in the interpreting field of teammates offering each other feedback and in one of the TAP, I recognized I had made a mistake at a work-related event and was only getting upset because I was worried other people would not understand my motives. What I vocalized in response was “I don't need to justify myself or validate myself.” After debating the options I had for responding to a certain situation, I recorded another TAP where I reflected on the choice I made to share some of my own thoughts and perspectives. To summarize, I expressed appreciation after listening to the opinions of a colleague and how this exchange left me with a desire to develop both a professional and personal relationship. A few days later, I briefly documented how the work-related events I had previously processed in a TAP were coming to mind along with details I described as “justifying myself but realized I don’t need to [do] that.” Vocalizing this statement gave me the sense that I would be less likely to feel the need to justify or validate myself the next time I experienced an event that I perceived as horizontal violence. These expressions are consistent with distancing, an emotional regulation technique explained by Powers and Labar (2019) as intentional viewing of situations from another perspective so to experience a less painful emotional reaction to the memory.

After a five-month gap in data collection, explained previously in this study, I recorded a TAP in preparation for a social gathering. I commented, “I could picture myself sitting down with [them] having coffee and looking forward to it instead of dreading it.” One possible explanation for this shift could be the social, rather than work context. From this point until the end of my data collection window, all of the feelings captured in my TAPs were coded as *Hope*

based feelings. When I experienced the need to reschedule plans with a person whom I previously expressed offense toward, more intentionality was required of me, I mentioned in a TAP, "I want to have an authentic friendship so I'm struggling with feelings of a forced friendship." This statement may support aspects of cognitive reappraisal (Ochsner & Gross, 2005) as it was made approximately one year after my first TAP was recorded.

A phrase I repeated in numerous TAPs was "it's not the end of the world." This was a control option to help me to shift my frame of reference off the worst-case scenario and onto the possibility of a future that could continuously improve. Thinking about my thinking, using my imagination, and understanding that situational demands have an influence on my frame of reference is partly supportive of the process Flavell (1971) called metacognition. The awareness of undesirable reactions, also described in this section, shed light on the process of identifying metacognitive knowledge.

Discourse and Recourse

Last, I will discuss the interventions I documented and how I monitored for progress toward my interpersonal and intrapersonal goals, including my locus of control shifting from external to internal. The third guidepost of learning transformation (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow 2000) is to collaborate with others, seeking to set a course of action amid contested beliefs. When I recorded my second TAP of the dataset, it was following a supervision session with my professor and peers where I shared my case about how I had recently experienced an interpersonal conflict at work. In the TAP, I expressed,

I wanted to get some suggestions of how to shift my perspective and continue to work [collegially] and not feel offended by [others'] choices. It was helpful to get different perspectives offered to me and different choices of how I could interact [in the future]. Simply engaging in discourse with people who are in the same career field, who had likely experienced similar situations, and would not share my story with others reduced my emotional burden. I left the Zoom meeting with over one hundred viable suggestions of actionable steps, and a greater sense of support from my peers. This outcome reinforces the conceptual framework in Dean and Pollard's *Demand-Control Schema*, in which they promote "The reflective practice of supervision" (2013, pp. 139 – 149).

In alignment with aspects of Brown and Ryan's (2003) mindfulness practices, I spent time considering my options, consciously shifting awareness from my internal and external experiences before choosing one or more suggestions from my peers to put into action. Interventions I implemented included seeking the perspective of my mentor, processing my emotions with a counselor and forgiving myself. In a TAP in March 2025, I stated, "I can forgive myself, for not taking those proactive measures in order to be more prepared," an action step consistent with the first phase of self-forgiveness from Cornish and Wade (2015). Next, I chose to forgive and pursue reconciliation with someone who I perceived as a transgressor, corresponding with the first of Freedman's (1998) four pathways to interpersonal repair. The result of this choice is in alignment with Worthington's (2020) description of decisional forgiveness; it was like a switch flipped on in my brain and I suddenly wanted to see the perceived transgressor in a different light. In four TAPs after this point, I recount using humor and laughing about "inside jokes" that only interpreters would understand which seemed to reduce tension I was experiencing at the time.

While reflecting on my supervision session in a TAP, I remembered the “suggestion from supervision to get lunch with [them] and get to know [them].” I decided to put this suggestion into action. It was not until approximately one year after the initial triggering event that I began thinking about what it could look like to reach this goal. In my TAP, I state, “[I am] wondering what kind of conversations we might have, and I was starting to think about the questions I would ask [them] to get to know [them] better.” The delay was partially due to schedule conflicts, but I propose it also speaks to how this was a challenging goal for me to accomplish, as it required more intentionality to repeatedly re-schedule until a convenient time and place was agreed upon. This perseverance is generally consistent with the development of a growth mentality presented by Dweck and Legget (1988), and according to Epton (2017), this is why I was more likely, not less likely to accomplish my goal. Continuously choosing to pursue a friendship with another person contested my belief that starting a friendship should be easy. There was a time when I question my own motives in a TAP, asking myself “am I only friends with this person because I can benefit from them or because I just genuinely want to be their friend?” I also pondered, “friendships are so interesting, like, why do you choose to be friends with someone and continue to be friends with them?” After recording this TAP, I was able to reach my goal of engaging in a social setting with a person who I once perceived as a transgressor. My last TAP of the dataset captured my raw processing.

To illustrate the phenomenon of locus of control (Rotter 1966) shifting from external to internal, my final TAP recorded in January 2026 is self-evident. The following excerpt is a synthesized transcript wherein pauses, repetitions, and filler speech were condensed to emphasize the central themes of the reflection while preserving the meaning and emotional tone of the original recording.

I didn't overthink it. I just asked questions and we shared cool stories, connecting about things we have in common. I have decided to believe they are a kind, generous person that I just want to get to know. I didn't even have the thought of how I could benefit from having a friendship with them. I think that shows how my belief has changed over time and influenced how I perceive and interact with them. It didn't feel awkward. I didn't feel nervous, or any anxiety, or fear about talking to them again in the future. The idea of making plans to go on a trip was brought up and the thought of potentially doing that didn't cause me any hesitation or aversion.

When I learned more about this person I had previously perceived as a transgressor, I felt more confident in my interactions with them and even imagined future interactions being fun, not anxiety inducing.

Transformation

An unexpected finding in the data were my lack of acknowledging the initial offense in the first TAP of my dataset. I needed to recognize the avoidance behaviors and ongoing rumination on the incident meant I was hurt and had been offended. Upon recognizing this, I neither sought confrontation, restitution, nor an apology. Instead, I looked inward and decided to ask myself why I had been offended. Through metacognitive practices and choosing to forgive myself and others, negative responses to interactions decreased and prosocial thoughts and behaviors increased. This outcome contradicts findings in an apology and restitution study by Witvliet (2020), stating an apology from the offender produce a decrease in the experience of unforgiveness and negative emotions, along with increased positive emotions.

I sought to answer the question - Following an event of perceived horizontal violence, can I form a genuine friendship with the perceived transgressor? This endeavor was realized as the process of Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2000). An important conclusion to draw from this discussion is how transformation occurred through the process of learning first about my beliefs that informed my frames of reference, then engaging in discourse with trusted individuals and finally, deciding to change my beliefs and relate to others in a prosocial manner. The findings of the present study, along with the reviewed literature, answer my research question in the affirmative. The definition of genuine friendship may vary. To elaborate, after one year of engaging in self-reflective and connection fostering behaviors, I spent less time making assumptions and expressed more curiosity about the motivations and world views of others. Evidence of genuine friendship included recognizing the positive character traits of others and expressing desire for future occurrences of spending time with the person I had once perceived as a transgressor. The implications of this study include practitioners, and individuals in general, benefitting from structured reflective practices to process interpersonal conflict and develop metacognitive awareness.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, I addressed the research question: Following an event I perceived as horizontal violence, could I reflect on my own experience and express desire to become friends with the perceived transgressor? Data were collected by recording Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) during the first year of my professional practice as an ASL-English interpreter, which captured my reflections surrounding work-related events. Dean and Pollard's Demand Control Schema (2013) informed the data collection process by guiding my attention to the demands of interpersonal situations and the control options available to me as the practitioner.

I used a mixed-methods approach to data analysis. Through open coding (Glaser et al., 1968), data were coded into four primary categories: Thoughts, Feelings, Choices and Facts. Subcategories of Thoughts were coded for: the Situation, Myself and Others. Subcategories of Feelings were coded for: feelings based in Hope and based in Dread. Subcategories of Choices were coded for: choices made prior to, or Pre, During and, after, or Post work-related events. I chose not to code subcategories data coded as Facts and instead, reviewed facts in the thematic data analysis. Qualitative analysis revealed a thematic map of interconnected themes: Perceived Horizontal Violence, Metacognition, Goals, and Locus of Control Shifting from External to Internal. These themes illustrated how reflective, metacognitive regulation practices and intentional relational choices contributed to a shift in locus of control and the development of a collegial relationship over time. The full framework of Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow, 2000) was condensed to three guideposts for concise discussion of the results of the present study and the reviewed literature.

This study highlights the importance of interpersonal relationship development within the interpreting field, suggesting that intrapersonal (internal) intervention may be a valuable

response to actual or perceived horizontal violence. The interpreting field and individual interpreters will benefit from future empirical research building upon the present findings, expanded with multiple participants and similar, yet more structured data collection methods. Another finding deserving of mention is the benefits of presenting a “case” in a supervision session with a mentor, peers or both. This strategy brings insight and suggestions for courses of action from the perspective of others, emotionally removed from the case itself. Interpreter education programs may benefit from incorporating interactive instruction and practice of supervision.

Based on the findings of this study and the reviewed literature, the research question can be answered in the affirmative. A friendship can develop following an event of actual or perceived horizontal violence when an individual engages in cognitive reflection practices and intentionally pursues relational development. If adopted more widely within interpreter education, the practices highlighted in this study, including intentional reflection and a willingness to shift frames of reference, may support meaningful collegial relationships and reduce attrition rates, improving the likelihood of bringing well-functioning teams together to collaborate on job assignments for the communities served by interpreters. Overall, this study emphasizes professional responsibility for interpreter practitioners to engage in self-examination for the betterment of their own life, their practice, and the interpreting field in general.

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