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Interpreter Ideology: 'Editing' Discourse in Simultaneous Interpreting

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This study empirically investigates how interpreter ideology is manifested in the evaluative language of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in China in 2016 (English-Chinese language pair). Methodologically, van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' and Martin & White's Appraisal framework have been operationalised for the analysis of positive/negative evaluative language in 'us'/'them' discourses. The results reveal an overall positive-'us' and negative-'them' pattern in terms of the interpreter ideological positioning. This manifested in three ways: i) negative, pejorative, and sensitive discourses about China are self-censored, ii) positivity is accentuated and negativity is neutralised in China-related discourses, and iii) negative tones in the discourses of other countries are amplified. We can say that the speaker discourse is 'edited' during the simultaneous interpreting process when interpreter ideology is working. We acknowledge that linguistic patterns can only provide partial indications of the possible relationship between interpreter ideology and cognitive operations.

1. Introduction

There has been a long-standing paradigmatic tension in conference interpreting research (CIR), which tends to separate studies on interpreters' cognitive operations from those concerned with aspects of discourse and context.[1] The present investigation focuses on the discourse process in conference interpreting, aiming to uncover how interpreter ideology is manifested in the cognitively demanding context[2] of simultaneous interpreting. Although it requires more support from empirical evidence, the point of departure is that cognitive

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[1] See, for example, Gile's (2019: 1–3) discussion of types and trends of CIR research, https://www.cirinandgile.com/bulletins/Bulletin-58-Jul-2019.pdf .

[2] This study uses the definition of 'context' in discourse studies in which 'context' is defined as "discourse-relevant properties of social situations" (van Dijk 1998: 211). Discourse is then defined as socially constructed language use that may be ideologically charged (ibid).

processes of interpreting should be viewed as connected to and embedded in situational and socio-cultural factors (e.g. Pöchhacker 2005; Setton 1999, 2003). For example, Pöchhacker (2005: 692-693) links the two aspects in his approach to 'cognition in context' and posits interpreting as a 'socio-cognitive process'. Cognition, in its neurolinguistic sense, is responsible for processing the input discourse in a given social/political context. The interpreted products are thus shaped by both cognitive processing and discourse factors that give rise to potential shifts in the move from the source texts (STs) to the target texts (TTs).

We argue that the shifts in interpreting products in an on-the-hoof simultaneous mode are *anything but gratuitous* since they reveal both the macro-discourse process and micro-cognitive processing. Interpreters are embedded in a society where they are brought up and work professionally as interpreters. Their ideology, or 'value systems', are, over time and accumulatively, *socially* acquired, conditioned, and shared (van Dijk 1998, 2006). Interpreters' value systems are fundamentally tacit consents of their ideological position within a set of institutional and socio-political configurations. Interpreters come to a conference context with a set of existing ideological beliefs which places them in a non-neutral position from which to work. In the simultaneous mode of conference interpreting, such ideological aspects may influence how interpreters cognitively process value-rich information and deliver the corresponding TTs, often in a 'tight-rope' situation where interpreters work close to the saturation level of their processing capacity (Gile 1999). The combined effects of cognitive saturation and ideological discourse may contribute to omissions, changed sentences, and altered meanings (Apostolou 2009). Such operations in the 'black box' of the interpreter's brain may seem intractable; however, they leave concrete *linguistic evidence* in the interpreter's output, or interpreting product that permits close and detailed analysis.

While existing studies on the interpreting product in CIR mention little about cognitive processing, they have profitably uncovered interpreter agency, mediation, ideological intervention, and stance-taking in political and institutional contexts by examining a plethora of linguistic means. These include modality (Fu & Chen 2019), lexical labelling or terminologies (Beaton 2007; Beaton-Thome 2010), pronouns and self-referential nouns (Gu & Tipton 2020; Guo 2018), the use of perfect tense (Gu 2018), and evaluative language (Gao 2021; Munday 2012, 2018; Wang & Feng 2017). These product-oriented studies resonate

with survey-based studies (e.g. Diriker 2004; Zwischenberger 2015); the 'super-norm' of impartiality and loyalty to the speaker (Zwischenberger 2015)—promoted by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), probably the most influential norm-setting authority in the field—is empirically challenged, if not subverted. In the words of Hatim and Mason (1997: 147), interpreters 'intervene…, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs' into their processing of spoken texts; hence, interpreters are not a mere 'conduit' positioned 'in-between' (Tymoczko 2003), but may work 'within' a particular ideology (Pöchhacker 2005).

The interpreter ideological 'positioning' is central to this study. The concept of positioning is imported by Mason (1999) from Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory (in social psychology), in which the relational nature of communicative practices is emphasised. Mason uses it to replace the static concept of 'role', thereby emphasising the dynamic way interpreters discursively position themselves in relation to other communicative participants; for example, how interpreters demonstrate solidarity with one side. In the present study, the interpreter's ideological positioning is viewed as the process by which interpreters position themselves in relation to in/out-group speakers in terms of ideological beliefs.

The literature is lacking not so much in linguistic evidence of non-conformity to the super-norm of impartiality, but rather in the identification of explicit discourse structures regarding the interpreter ideological 'positioning', particularly in simultaneous interpreting. Relevant studies in the Chinese context predominantly examine data from consecutive interpreting (e.g. Gu 2018; Gu & Tipton 2020; Wang & Feng 2017). The present study takes this further by investigating how *simultaneous* interpreters render ideologically-rich speaker discourse by altering positive/negative evaluative language. Informed by the well-established Appraisal framework (Martin & White 2005, details in Section 3 below), evaluative language, all-pervasive in language use (Voloshinov 1929/1973: 105), constitutes the 'critical points' of interpreter decision-making. It is therefore 'most susceptible to value manipulation' in interpreting/translation, and "most revealing of" the interpreter/translator's values (Munday 2012: 41). Evaluative language is examined contrastively between the STs and TTs to map out the altered positive/negative evaluations that index the interpreter ideological positioning.

Working with an interpreting corpus built from the World Economic Forum's Annual

Meeting in China (see Section 4.2), we focus on the following research question:

What (patterns of) linguistic shifts in the move from STs to TTs point to the interpreter ideological positioning? How far do these patterns provide evidence of cognitive constraints in simultaneous interpreting?

2. Ideology and interpreter ideology

The present study draws on van Dijk's (1998: 26, 2006, 2016) neutral conceptualisation of ideology as group-based 'clusters of beliefs in our minds'. This finds its provenance in social psychology as *social cognition*, itself defined as 'schemata' that reflect the actualities of intergroup relations, or social representations of group members (cf. Augoustinos et al. 2014). However, van Dijk (1990) criticises the concept for devaluing the discourse dimension, arguing that it is through discourse that social cognition, as ideological beliefs, is communicated, formed, changed, reproduced, "and thus conveyed and normalised or legitimised" in socially situated groups (ibid: 177). Van Dijk (1998) proposes a theory of ideology with three dimensions:

(1) *cognition*, group members' social knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs;

(2) *society*, societal and political interests, conflicts, and struggles that characterise in/out-group dynamics; and

(3) *discourse*, language use that expresses and reproduces ideologies in society through concealment, legitimisation, or manipulation.

The effectiveness of this approach lies in the connection van Dijk configures between the social context and discourse through the *interface* of social cognition. Ideological talk or text may produce and reproduce ideology in social contexts (van Dijk 2016: 498). In other words, ideological text and talk—as linguistic forms—permit the examination of ideology (re)produced in a given context.

From the perspective of in/out-group dynamics, van Dijk (1998, 2006, 2016) proposes an *Ideological Square*. This is ostensibly an ideological polarisation of '*us'-vs.-'them'*, or different evaluations for in-groups and out-groups intrinsically rooted socio-cognitively in people's mental constructs about societal self and others. Such a mental model is acquired and

formulated through individuals' internalising their social interaction/engagement/contact with in/out-group members (cf. Holtgraves & Kashima 2008). Figure 1 illustrates the way positivity about 'us' and negativity about 'them' are emphasised while positivity about 'them' and negativity about 'us' are under stated (van Dijk 1998, 2006).
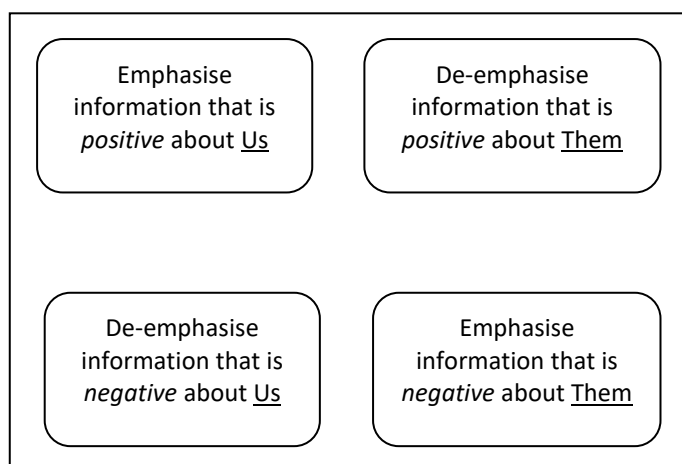

Figure 1. Ideological Square; based on text descriptions from van Dijk (1998)

In the light of van Dijk's social-group-based theorisation of ideology, conference interpreters, a particular social and professional group viewed as a 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998), acquire and reproduce ideological beliefs in relation to their affiliations with an institution, government body, and nation. They are bound socio-cognitively by the dominant ideology that underlies, reinforces, and entails group-member conformity to the consistent social beliefs and values of certain groups (cf. van Dijk 2016). Interpreters have at least two social-group identities: (a) citizens of a particular state or nation and (b) entrusted members of an institution/government by (in)direct affiliation (in-house interpreters or trusted freelancers with task-based contracts). Such identity affiliations may result in mental affinity and value ascription towards the dominant ideology of that group, and their internalised ideology may serve to maintain the overall group interests. Their national identity/affiliation are primordially acquired, which may lead to their ideological intervention to protect home-nation interests when the ST discourses challenge 'us' regarding issues of territorial integrity, national security, and national image, among others (Gao 2021). Their institutional/government association may then motivate them to achieve stance-alignment

with the dominant ideology of that institution/government. For example, Chinese institutional interpreters at Chinese government press conferences have been shown to align their ideological positioning with China and Beijing by protecting and promoting the positive image of China (Fu & Chen 2019; Gu 2018; Gu & Tipton, 2020; Wang & Feng 2017). These empirical findings converge in a pattern of positive 'us' representation, while barely examining the negative 'them' construct of the Ideological Square. The present study considers both in-group and out-group dimensions by focusing on value-rich evaluative language, for which the next section discusses a linguistic toolkit for analysis.

3. Appraisal framework

Evaluation is a superordinate term for expressing speaker/writer 'attitude or stance towards, viewpoints on, or feelings about the entities or propositions' (Hunston & Thompson 2000: 5). The Appraisal framework encompasses and categorises linguistic resources that construct 'shared feelings and values' (Martin & White 2005: 1) and constitute 'a systematic, detailed, and elaborate framework of evaluative language' (Bednarek 2006: 32). For translation and interpreting studies, Appraisal offers a useful and intricate toolkit for analysing translator/interpreter intervention (Munday 2018).

Appraisal models three broad discourse-semantic categories: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement (Martin & White 2005). *Attitude* is concerned with ways of expressing *affect* (emotion), *judgment*, and *appreciation* (aesthetics); *Graduation* mainly concerns the gradable intensity of evaluation; *Engagement* concerns the scalability of dialogic space.

It is Attitude and Graduation that are central in the analysis of ideological factors in this study. Attitude, the essence of evaluation, is prototypically realised through attitudinally loaded adjectives or 'evaluative epithets' (Halliday 1994: 184), which correspond to lexical items with *positive/negative* polarities, such as *(un)happy, (dis)honest, powerful/less,* and *(un)balanced* (Martin & White 2005). The Graduation system concerns the gradability of attitudinal meanings with scalable degrees of authorial intensity and the degree of investment in the proposition; the semantic values are largely realised by adjective/adverbial modifiers such as *many, more, very, extremely, little, slightly, sort of,* and *kind of* (ibid).

These dimensions of Appraisal values coexist in discourse. Each value can be positive or negative and can be intensified or downscaled. The most explicit, direct way is the use of intensifiers/downscalers as modifiers of evaluative epithets. For instance, *most reliable* and *very strong leadership* construct intensified positive evaluations. Another coexistent form is indirect, implied, or 'invoked' evaluation, which often involves the use of lexical metaphors. For instance, the metaphorical use of *divorce* or *pain* (for Brexit) invokes intensified negative feelings in the audience. Table 1 provides some examples of evaluative expressions taken from the corpus data.

Table 1. Attitude and Graduation systems of Appraisal (with examples adapted from the corpus data from this study)

		Attitude	
		Positive evaluation	Negative evaluation
Graduation	Intensified	*very glad, extremely powerful, more welcome, more innovative, most reliable, rather fruitful discussions, very beautiful poem, very strong leadership*	*quite emotional, very dangerous, much misunderstanding, significantly undermine, high level of tension, a blow, shock,* Brexit *pain*
	Downscaled	*a little optimistic, slightly hopeful, sort of effective, sort of a new way, sort of better life, kind of advantage*	*a little afraid, sort of incompetent, somewhat problematic, a little insufficient, sort of crisis, a slightly distorted picture*

The current investigation focuses on how these evaluative locutions are altered from the STs to the TTs, which is captured by the concept of *interpreting shifts*. While the notion of shifts is originally defined in translation studies on the lexicogrammatical level as 'departures from formal correspondence when going from ST to TT' (Catford 1965), this study anchors analysis at the discourse-semantic stratum of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Halliday 1994). Such shifts of meaning in the interpreting process are realised lexically and

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may shed light on the motivations behind the selection of words as well as on the overall strategies adopted (Munday et al 2022: 75). Specifically, the present study focuses on how TTs depart from the STs in the form of omissions, additions, and substitutions in the Attitude and Graduation resources illustrated in Table 1.

The polarised 'us/them' structure on the discourse level can be realised by the Appraisal expressions on the linguist level. Therefore, we can link linguistic shifts of Appraisal to the two frames of the Ideological Square—'us/them' and 'positive/negative'. Archetypal examples include interpreting omissions, additions, and substitutions of a) expressions of Attitude (with positive, neutral, or negative values) and b) expressions of Graduation (intensifiers and downscalers) in relation to China ('us') and other countries ('them'). In this way, interpreting shifts alter the original discourse orientations and structures. The combined framework is operationalised in quantitative and qualitative analyses, as we shall see in Sections 5 and 6.

4. Data background and corpus

4.1 A locus of ideological contestation: The World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in China

This annual event in China (commonly known as 'Summer Davos') is organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF). With its mission of 'engag[ing] the foremost political, business, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas'[3] from a wide range of countries and regions, the WEF provides a 'multiphonic' platform where world political and economic leaders, prominent academics, and media groups with diverse national backgrounds mingle and discuss topics germane to vital transnational/regional issues. The WEF's *de facto* influence cannot be underestimated (Streimikiene 2012) because it now plays the role of 'champions, global leaders, global shapers' (Garsten & Sörbom 2016: 19)

The data for the present study are sourced from the WEF's annual meeting in China in 2016, an eventful year. This discursive event constitutes a richly multiphonic site of ideological contestation on two grounds. First, the discourse is highly charged politically

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[3] See https://www.weforum.org/about/world-economic-forum

because this event occurred against the backdrop of Brexit in Europe, the US presidential election, the territorial dispute over the South China Sea, and shifts in power among countries due to imbalanced economic development. These topics easily become tipping points of ideological contestation, if not confrontation, among speakers from the 'West' and the 'East' (Gao 2022). Second, this Chinese-hosted meeting, viewed as the most successful spin-off event of the main WEF, brings together speakers from the 'new-champion' countries such as China and other Asian countries as well as from major Western 'powerhouse' countries or entities (such as the US, the UK, and European Union). In a single discursive event, discourses are co-constructed by the multiple actors. However, speaker heterogeneity tends to generate clashes among different ideological beliefs rather than construct common ground (cf. Garsten & Sörbom 2016). Professional interpreters employed by the Chinese government for the 2016 Summer Davos were incontrovertibly caught between blatant or latent ideological tensions among different speakers representing different geographical or political interests.

The interpreters[4] and the local organisers for WEF's summer events may be assumed to be ideologically aligned. The Chinese central government and the host-city government have collaborated in the organisation of the Summer Davos Forum in China since 2007. One of their tasks is to provide language services implemented by Chinese-English simultaneous conference interpreters. The simultaneous interpreters for the 2016 panels were highly qualified, experienced professionals who are Chinese nationals employed by the Chinese government. It is highly likely that, socio-cognitively, they viewed themselves as part of an in-group with China and the Chinese government, following van Dijk's (1998, 2006) description of socio-cognition.

4.2 Corpus data

The WEF-in-China Interpreting Corpus, built for a larger project, was used in this study. All corpus data were orthographically transcribed from publicly available videos on the WEF official website

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[4] We are not able to report detailed information about the interpreters' age, gender, years' experience, qualifications because they are not provided by the WEF's official website. The only relevant data we can only report is that, from the TT audio data, the interpreters are Chinese nationals.

(https://www.weforum.org/events/annual-meeting-of-the-new-champions-2016). The data are from the spontaneous panel discussions (un-scripted) and simultaneous interpreting from eight panels (see Table 2). Relevant methodological details such as text transcription, alignment, and annotation, not described here for reasons of space, are available in Gao (2020a). Table 2 presents the corpus information for the eight panels that featured *political, geopolitical*, and *economic-political* issues. The grouping of topic areas was aided by the topics listed on the WEF website in tandem with the 'Keywords' corpus technique that generated a list of main topics by revealing the 'aboutness' (Baker 2010: 133) of the text data of each panel. The results from the Keywords procedure show that the discussions in these WEF panels were concerned with political, geopolitical, or economic-political issues regarding China, other Asian countries, and certain Western countries (Gao 2020a). Four to six speakers (two to four national backgrounds) featured on each panel, giving rise to potential political or ideological differences. Among the eight panels, five were interpreted from the interpreters' B language (English) to the A language (Chinese), and three panels were interpreted bidirectionally (English < > Chinese). The total duration of the corpus is 13.48 hours (809'05''), making it a substantial data set.

Table 2. Information about the WEF-in-China Interpreting Corpus

Corpus ID No.	Topics on the WEF website	Speaker backgrounds	Directionality (A: Chinese, B: English)	Video lengths (for STs + TTs)
1	Asia's Shifting Alliances	Chinese, US, Korean, UK	B→A	64'03'' + 64'13''
2	China's G20 Agenda	Chinese, Turkish, US	A→B; B→A	43'01'' + 43'07''
3	China's Global Ambitions	Chinese, US, EU member states	A→B; B→A	60'01'' + 60'09''
4	Global Economic Outlook: The View from Asia	Chinese, US, Turkish	B→A	60'40'' + 60'49''
5	Into the Fourth Industrial Revolution	Chinese, Canadian, EU member states	B→A	44'43'' + 44'43''

6	One Belt, One Road, Many Winners?	Chinese, US, EU member states	A→B; B→A	64'16'' + 64'19''
7	After Brexit 1	UK, US	B→A	33'28'' + 33'28''
8	After Brexit 2	UK, US, EU member states	B→A	34'07'' + 34'09''

The size of the corpus (textual transcription) is 168,487 tokens, divided between the ST subcorpus (85,100 tokens) and the TT subcorpus (83,387 tokens). Regarding the two directionalities of interpreting, the size of B→A (English → Chinese) data is larger than that of A→B (Chinese → English), with 131,036 and 37,451 tokens, respectively.[5]

The selection and use of the corpus data are underpinned by two rationales. First, the dataset features the simultaneous rendering of spontaneous, unscripted discussions alongside ideologically charged discourses; this offers a chance to capture how interpreters respond to the ideologically charged discourses with constrained time allowance. Second, the corpus-based approach for this study may be categorised as using 'naturalistic methods [that] can be more efficient than strictly controlled experiments when investigating some issues related to […] sociological aspects of interpreting' (Gile 2015: 55). In our case, these aspects under analysis are ideological.

The annotation of Appraisal expressions was done manually because the focus was on the evaluative meaning, which currently cannot be easily retrieved by corpus tools alone. The reliability of the manual process was strengthened using two methods. First, Appraisal (Martin & White 2005) was used as the linguistic framework for the semantic annotation of evaluative meaning. In addition, the lexical examples were referenced from Martin & White (2005) for the English language, Peng et al. (2015) for the Chinese language, and Munday (2012) for Appraisal shifts in translation/interpreting. These three publications are widely cited and referenced for analysing evaluative language. Second, inter-coder and intra-coder agreement tests were conducted to ensure the reliability of the semantic annotation. The recommended portion of 20% of the corpus data (Brezina 2018) was tagged. The inter-coder

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[5] This imbalance reflects an Anglophonic predominance in international events and the associated 'Western influence' in international communication.

agreement test required manual tagging by two trained coders (Gao and her colleague); the intra-coder test entailed one coder (Gao) tagging the data twice with a reasonable time interval (5 months). The test results showed high levels of agreement, 91.44% and 89.26%, respectively; since the recommended threshold is above 80% (Brezina 2018: 89), we can say that it offers a reliable base for data extraction, description, and interpretation.

5. Quantitative analysis

5.1 Lexical shifts

Table 3 displays three notable patterns: (1) over half the additions/substitutions are cases of positive or neutralised evaluations about China (n = 176 out of 286); (2) negative evaluative words in China-related discourses are noticeably omitted (n = 513); (3) the negative evaluation for 'them' is also notable in the addition/substitution category (n = 83). In the first two patterns, the noticeably high numbers concentrate on topics about China; they suggest the interpreters' strong propensity to adopt ideological positioning in support of China. The third pattern, though quantitatively less prominent, still reflects the interpreters' negative 'them' ideological positioning.

Table 3. Lexical shifts of positive/negative evaluation in relation to interpreters' in/out-group positions

	Omissions				Additions/Substitutions[6]			
	China (in -group)		Others (out -group)		China (in -group)		Others (out -group)	
	Freq.	*%*	*Freq.*	*%*	*Freq.*	*%*	*Freq.*	*%*
Positive evaluation	32	2.6	259	20.9	176	14.2	22	1.8
Negative	513	41.4	148	12.0	5	0.4	83	6.7

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[6] Additions and substitutions of evaluative words are considered as a single category in the quantitative analysis for two reasons. First, neither case is large enough to generate a meaningful statistical result on its own. Second, akin to the additions of evaluative expressions, substitutions may also require extra cognitive effort to encode evaluative meaning differently (Munday 2018); the two categories are arguably similar in terms of the requirement of cognitive efforts.

evaluation		
Total	76.9% (*n* = 952)	23.1% (*n* = 286)

To further examine the lexical shifts in relation to interpreter ideological positioning, we examined the relationships between two categorical variables: variable A (lexical shifts in positive/negative evaluation), and variable B (interpreters' in/out-group positions in which China and the Chinese government are socio-cognitively viewed as the in-group and other states/governments are viewed as the out-group). Variable A is based on the annotation of positive/negative evaluative expressions; variable B is based on the annotation of the in-group/out-group discourses in the corpus data. A Chi-squared test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the two variables. This was followed by Cramér's *V* to determine the strengths of association. For omissions, the difference between China and other countries in terms of evaluative shifts is statistically significant ($\chi2$ (*df* = 1, *n* = 952) = 284.732, *p* < 0.001). The difference is also statistically significant for the category of additions/substitutions ($\chi2$ (*df* = 1, *n* = 286) = 181.538, *p* < 0.001).

After determining the significance for both categories (omissions and additions/substitutions), what needs to be underscored is the difference in strength of association revealed by the Cramér's *V* results: the category of omissions (*V* = 0.547, *n* = 952, *p* < 0.001) is noticeably outnumbered by that of additions/substitutions (*V* = 0.797, *n* = 286, *p* < 0.001). This means that the Chinese interpreters are *moderately* likely to omit evaluative words based on their in/out-group positions. Meanwhile, the high value for additions/substitutions indicates that there is a strong possibility that the Chinese interpreters will add or substitute evaluative words either in favour of China or in opposition to other countries. Additions/substitutions of evaluative words might entail more cognitive effort in order to process the additional evaluative meaning compared to omissions; the high strength for the category of additions/substitutions might serve as tentative evidence of ideological motivation from the interpreters.

5.2 Sentence omissions concentrated on pejorative, sensitive discourses about China

Sentence omissions are anything but trivial. Among the total of 145 occurrences of sentence omissions, slightly over half of sentences (53.8%, *n* = 78; shown in Figure 2) contain evaluative messages saturated with negative or politically sensitive discourses about China; sentence omissions regarding other countries due to linguistic difficulties[7] and other reasons relating to small-talk interactions, transitions, or repetitions were fewer.
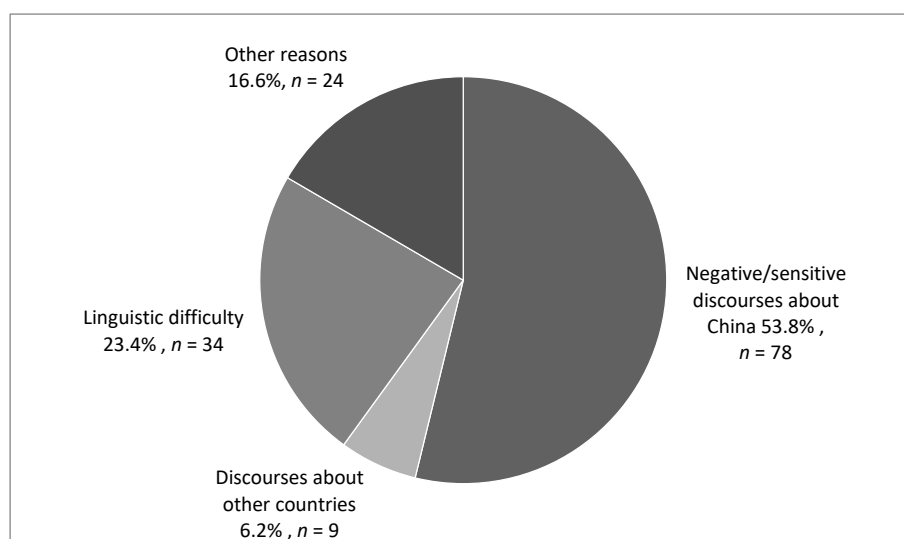

Figure 2. Discourse, linguistic and other aspects that may have led to sentence omissions during the simultaneous interpreting process

Despite the fact that sentence omissions are often deemed to be palpable 'errors', it might be surmised that the pejorative, sensitive discourses about China pose ideological threats in the target situation (with many Chinese officials and media on-site) and might run contrary to Chinese the interpreter ideological beliefs. A possible explanation is that the interpreters had to commit extra cognitive effort in an attempt to neutralise or de-sensitise these interventions but failed, resorting to the final emergency tactic of sentence omission.

6. Qualitative analysis

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[7] Linguistic difficulties refer to challenges in interpreting posed by difficult words, unfamiliar terminologies, culture-specific metaphors, different accents, and the high speed of delivery. These were coded by Gao and a trained coder, both experienced conference interpreters. Several meetings were held to set criteria for coding linguistic difficulties before commencing the annotation. The inter-coder test result shows a relatively high level of agreement (91.18%).

6.1 Self-censored negative 'us' discourses through omissions

In terms of ideology, what is not rendered is as revealing as what is rendered (Tymoczko, 2010). In Example 1, the discourse concerns the territorial dispute over the South China Sea, and the overall tone is negative. The speaker first comments on the risk of 'military conflict' and continues to evaluate its negative repercussions on China-US economic relations as 'a blow'—a lexical metaphor that invokes stronger negative feelings. The interpreter self-censors the negative discourse by omitting 'a blow' and encodes 'undermining' differently as '影响' (*influence*). Thus, the actual negative value in the discourse is considerably diluted. This single omission appears to exert subtle effects on the TT discourse, but when it is considered along with the high proportion of shifts (41.4%), the cumulative effect is to neutralise negative discourses about China.

Example 1[8]. (South China Sea territorial dispute)

(Speaker: Chinese academic; Panel 1: 13'14''; Interpreter: 1.1)[9]

ST: If we accidentally just reacting in a way, very unreasonable and emotional, then there will be some sort of military conflict, and they would spark military tensions. Now, there will be big undermining and a blow to the China-US economic relations.

TT: 如果擦枪走火的话，那么它可能是，你如果出现情绪呀，或者是得出现，可能就会引起了军事冲突。而且也会影响中美之间的经济关系。

Gloss of TT: *If there is gunfire, then it could be, if you are emotional, or have to be, it will possibly give rise to military conflicts. And it will* underline*influence the China-US economic relations.*

Sentence omissions, then, may explicitly point to the interpreter ideological positioning rather than lexical omissions. Example 2 is also about the South China Sea dispute; an

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[8] In the examples, the changes of evaluative language are underlined.

[9] The speaker information includes his/her national and professional backgrounds. Temporal points of ST-starts are given for each example; panel numbers match the corpus ID number in Table 2. Each professional Chinese interpreter is given an ID code, for example, '1.1' (panel 1, interpreter 1).

American political scientist remarks in a negative manner about China's nationalist and populist orientations—politically sensitive topics. His comments obviously contradict Beijing's position as he criticises China's political issues in front of the WEF audience and the foreign media on site. The Chinese interpreter hesitates with two voiced fillers after he hears the politically and ideological sensitive phrase 'nationalist flag'. Then, although time would allow for a full rendition (with a pause of approximately 5 seconds in the TT), the interpreter omits the latter sentence, possibly because of a mix of awareness of self-censorship and a status of indecision regarding how to 're-engineer' the discourse regarding 'us'.

Example 2. (Nationalism in China)

(Speaker: American political scientist; Panel 1: 39'42''; Interpreter: 1.1

ST: Because then, the Chinese are acting out of insecurity, {and they need to raise the nationalist (39'44'') flag, and they need to play to a much more populist orientation.}

TT: 那么，如果中国，出于安全问题，呃，那么…

Gloss of TT: *Then, if China, out of security issues, err, well,* (5-second pause)

Example 3. (China-Russian relations)

(Speaker: American political scientist; Panel 6: 49'48''; Interpreter: 6.2)

ST: All of the countries out there, everyone wants to be driven economically. The Russians are being driven by hard security and by energy. <u>They look like a loser</u> <u>from One-Belt-One-Road geo-strategically.</u> And I do worry that as the Americans and the Chinese are focusing on the status quo. […] <u>There are reasons why China and Russia</u> <u>didn't talk about it</u>, when Putin came to visit Xin Jinping. {<u>It's not because it's not</u> <u>important just because they don't agree.</u>

TT: 非常重要的是，要做经济的驱动。而且呢，这个，呃，从我们俄罗斯这个的国家而言，我认为，它似乎注意力还是集中于自己的一些国内的事物，[…] 比如说，呃，普京刚刚见了习近平，呃，<u>但是，似乎，我们也没有看到在这方面有</u><u>非常好的一个进展。</u>

Gloss of TT: *Very importantly, is to be economically driven. And, well, err, from the Russians this country so to speak, I think, it seems to focus on its own domestic*

affairs. [...] (a sentence omission) *For example, err, Putin just visited Xi Jinping,* (a sentence omission)*, err, <u>but, it seems, we didn't see in that regard a very good development</u>.*

The ST discourse in Example 3 is negatively charged and politically sensitive; they apparently prompt the two-sentence omissions. The likely stimuli are the ideologically-saturated and politically-sensitive locutions—Russia looks 'like a loser' . These are immediately followed by the interpreter's voiced fillers '这个' (*well*), '呃' (*err*), and hedging '似乎' (*it seems*). This suggests, arguably, the interpreter's detection of ideologically-threatening points that needed self-censorship. Interestingly, unlike in Example 2, there is no noticeable long pause in Example 3. Instead, the interpreter omits the ideologically-charged discourse 'because they don't agree' and invents a generic comment '也没有看到[…]非常好的一个进展'(*didn't see [...] good development*) to fill the temporal gap and possibly eschew such sensitivity and negativity regarding Sino-Russia relations. In doing so, the interpreter only mentions Putin's visit to China in passing, concealing the ST discourse about the disagreement between the two heads of state. We may speculate that the interpreter's cognitive operation to give up a linguistically easier sentence to 'invent' a new TT discourse that deviates from the ST might have necessitated more cognitive expenditure.

6.2 Accentuated positive 'us' and negative 'them' representations through additions/substitutions

Positive 'us' presentations are accentuated through additions/substitutions of appraisal expressions during the interpreting process. In Example 4, when the South Korean speaker comments positively about China as 'a reliable party', the interpreter intensifies the positive value by substituting 'party' with '伙伴' (*partner*, a term with explicit positive value) and adding '可以能很好地展现' (*is able to show…in a very good way*) to China's '领导' (*leadership*). Thus, two positive appraisals (*able* and *very good*) emphatically enhance the positive discourse about China. Additions of evaluative words amount to added messages. Such *ex-nihilo* additions repeated in multiple cases may culminate in an amplification of

positive 'us' representation, although they likely demand an increase in interpreter cognitive efforts.

Example 4. (China's regional role in Asia)

(Speaker: South Korean government official; Panel 1: 44'45''; Interpreter: 1.1)

ST: She is the <u>leader and a reliable party</u> to lead the common growth in the region as a whole. ("She" refers to China.)

TT: 中国<u>可以</u>能很好地展现她的领导，<u>是一个可靠的伙伴</u>，她就可以来领导这个地区的共同发展。

Gloss: China <u>is able to show her leadership in a very good way and is a reliable partner</u>, so she can lead the common growth of the region.

Meanwhile, negative 'us' representations of China are neutralised through interpreters' substitutions of appraisal words. Examples 5 and 6 show the ways in which the Chinese interpreters substitute overtly negative evaluative expressions with neutral ones. When the speaker refers to the South China Sea territorial dispute with Japan as a 'quite dangerous period', the interpreter substitutes 'dangerous' with '非常的' (*unusual*); thus, the negative tone is obliterated. In a similar vein, when the speaker disparages China as a 'poor' country, the interpreter encodes it differently as a '发展中' (*developing*) country. Furthermore, the interpreter omits the negative evaluative statement 'China's writing big cheques'. In both examples, the interpreters do not select readily available lexical equivalents (with overt negative values) but replace them with neutral non-equivalents Since the variation of evaluative meaning may require extra cognitive effort from the interpreters to 'encode differently' (Munday 2018: 180), it could be predicted that it is the interpreter in-group ideology of vindicating China's positive image that constitutes a factor in these increased demands.

Example 5. (South China Sea dispute between China and Japan)

(Speaker: American political scientist; Panel 1: 16'12''; Interpreter: 1.1)

ST: At that point, you know, that, that was, that was quite a <u>dangerous</u> period. (The pronoun "that" refers to the period after a Japanese warship attacked Chinese fishing boats.)

TT: 因此，这确实是一个<u>非常的</u>一个时期。

Gloss of TT: *So, this was indeed an <u>unusual</u> period.*

Example 6. (China's economic status)

(Speaker: European CEO; Panel 6: 25'38''; Interpreter: 6.2)

ST: But let's understand {China's writing big cheques}, and still a <u>poor</u> country.

TT: 但是，另外一点也要认识到，它还是一个<u>发展中</u>国家。

Gloss of TT: *But, another point to be noted, it's still a <u>developing</u> country.*

Negative 'them' representations are also intensified in the TT discourse. Examples 7 and 8 pertain to discourses about the UK. In Example 7, the speaker uses a neutral expression '受影响' (*be influenced*) to describe inward investment in the UK post Brexit. The interpreter encodes it differently as 'suffer', which intensifies the negativity by insinuating evaluative values into the factual information and evokes negative feelings among the audience (cf. Martin & White 2005). Example 8 presents another case in which the general, neutral ST is encoded with an explicit, negative thrust in the TT. While the speaker sounds reserved about the implications of Brexit with a neutral term '影响' (*influences*) used on two occasions, the interpreter encodes it with the concrete lexical metaphors 'pains and impact, and blow'—this strong negative invocation does not exist in the ST. Such rendering from general to specific, metaphorical, and negativity-enhanced expressions is likely to require more cognitive effort than a 'verbatim' rendition.

Example 7. (Foreign investment to the UK after Brexit)

(Speaker: Chinese academic; Panel 2: 59'01''; Interpreter: 2.2)

ST: 我认为这是一个 shock […] 第二类投资是在英国设厂，[…] 这类投资如果

有的话会，它受影响。 (The pronoun 这 ("*this*") refers Brexit. The pronoun 它 ("*it*") refers the second type of investment. The speaker talks about the influence of Brexit on foreign investment to the UK.)

Gloss of ST: *I think this is a shock* […] *The second type of investment is building factories in the UK,* […] *if there is such investment, it will be influenced.*

TT: I saw it as a shock […] There is another type that is green-field investment, building factories in the UK […], it may suffer.

Example 8. (The Brexit impact)

(Speaker: Chinese government official; Panel; 2: 57'52''; Interpreter: 2.2)

ST: 但是总体来讲它的规模，是有影响，短期毫无疑问，这对信心、对市场都有影响。

Gloss of ST: *But on the whole, its scale, there will be influences, in the short term undoubtedly, influences on the confidence and the market.*

TT: So there will be pains and impact, and blow to its full confidence and it's also for market activities.

7. Discussion

The starting point of this study was that evaluation is all-pervasive in language use, often devalued when subsumed under the interpersonal function in interpreting/translation (cf. Halliday 2001), yet most revealing of the interpreter/translator's values (Munday 2012). Using empirical data from the WEF's annual meeting in China in 2016, we examined the patterns of linguistic changes in relation to the interpreter ideological positioning and speculatively sought indirect evidence for the relationship between interpreter ideology and cognitive processing.

Interpreting shifts in evaluative language converge in *a positioning pattern of positive*

'us' and negative 'them'. Specifically, 1) omissions of negative 'us' discourses are linked to self-censorship (cf. Tymoczko 2009), and sentence omissions concentrate on China-related sentences that are saturated with political sensitivity and loaded with negative evaluation; 2) lexical alterations of appraisal expressions *de facto* cause the TT discourses to depart from those of STs such that a) China-related negative and pejorative discourses are neutralised or mitigated, b) positive discourses about China are accentuated, and c) discourses about other countries are reformulated with an intensified negative tone. It can be seen that shifts at the linguistic level contribute to changes in discourses about China and other countries.

Interpreters' alterations of evaluative language are indicative of their ideological positioning and alignment with China and the Chinese government. This is shown by the interpreters' discursive attempts to protect/promote China/Beijing's image on the Davos platform through their censoring of negative representations of China and their intensifying of positive representations of China. In addition, the negativity associated with other countries was augmented. This in/out-group distinction lends empirical support to van Dijk's (1998) theoretical ideological polarisation of 'us' and 'them'. The positive 'us' positioning of the Chinese interpreters working at the WEF meeting generally resonates with Chinese institutional interpreters' stance-alignment with China/Beijing in government press conferences (e.g. Gu 2018; Gu & Tipton 2020; Liao & Pan 2018; Wang & Feng 2017); the interpreters' negative 'them' tendency revealed in this study, albeit less cogent, empirically adds to existing discussions about the interpreter ideological intervention.

Interpreter ideology functions to 'edit' the ST discourse. Linguistically, such editing is realised through the manipulation of evaluative language which tends to be overlooked in studies of translation (Munday, 2012); however, evaluative language becomes the main 'editing' channel through which conference interpreters alter the ST positive/negative values to achieve their ideological positioning. Such editing configures the positive 'us' and negative 'them' discourse structures in the TTs that depart from the value positions in the STs. While interpreting does 'bridge' various discourses (Schäffner 2004), it inevitably 'reconstructs' (Gao 2020b) the discourse for the target audience. Through this discourse reconstruction process, ideological considerations often trump translational considerations. One serious potential consequence of this is seen at international conferences, where political and business

leaders as well as world media agencies participate; in this scenario, the 'edited' discourse may not only be accepted uncritically by decision-makers in the audience but may also be fed into a chain of media circulation in which 'edited' values often just 'pass unnoticed' (Munday 2007: 197). In other words, the 'edited' discourse is commonly taken as the speakers' value positions, thereby helping to shape the evidence used by leaders to interpret a situation and to take decisions.

We now return to a consideration of the second research question. Patterns of linguistic changes provide *important but only partial and implicit* predictions for possible relations between interpreter ideology and cognitive operations in simultaneous interpreting. Based on an analysis of textual output alone, it is impossible to separate the ideology-driven shifts categorically from those due to cognitive processing factors. This was observed by Shlesinger (1999), who described the difficulty in distinguishing between cognitive limitations and norm-based constraints. However, by focusing in depth on what happens to value-rich evaluative language in interpreting, we are able to explore how the textual output reflects the cognitive processing of ideologically charged discourses. Thus, the additions/substitutions of evaluative words probably necessitate additional cognitive effort, often under the processing constraints of SI, to alter positive/negative orientations in discourse. Behind discourse reconstruction made in the text lie the interpreters' cognitive efforts to achieve ideological positioning. Importantly, the cognitive load in simultaneous interpreting does not merely involve 'memory effort', but also others such as inferential effort to retrieve the contexts[10] to create meaning (Setton 1999). According to Setton, contexts may inject additional cognitive inputs (Setton 2003). In our ideological-loaded data, what may have increased the interpreters' cognitive load are the on-site, contextual ideological 'stimuli'—speaker discourse that contradicted the interpreter ideological beliefs. It could be assumed that interpreters *act in response* to the ST ideological 'stimuli' by allocating cognitive processing capacities to add or substitute evaluative language to achieve ideological positioning acceptable to the TT audience.

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[10] Setton's (1999, 2003) use of context is different from discourse-relevant definition of context in this study. Setton draws on Malinowski's (1923) concept of the context of situation, taken up by Halliday (1994) in his systemic functional linguistics, to refer to the cultural context of the use of language.

However, the hypothesis of 'responsive' interpreter ideology can only be speculative from our linguistic and discourse evidence identified in the interpreting product. Despite the fact that the data is taken from a real—ecologically valid—conference-interpreting situation, how interpreter ideology affects cognitive operations remains open to question. As we noted at the beginning of the article, CIR seems divided between cognitive science/neuroscience and a more qualitative humanities perspective (Muñoz et al. 2019). To address this, and to reinforce CIR as a multivalent, yet coherent sub-discipline of scholarly significance, it is vital to 'reconcile the duality between the *overall discourse process* and the *cognitive processing operations*' (Pöchhacker 2005: 692; our emphasis) and 'overcome the "two cultures" divide' between neurosciences and humanities (Muñoz et al. 2019: 500).

In experiments in laboratory settings, it should be possible to test the 'responsive' interpreter-ideology hypothesis because, in the reference discipline of psychology, researchers adopt an integrative approach to study political ideology in relation to neural sensitivity with neuroscience methods such as ERP and fMRI (e.g. Hibbing et al. 2014; Jost & Amodio 2012; Zamboni et al. 2009). Looking further ahead, the neuroscience methods being applied in interpreting studies—EEG, iEEG, ERP, PET, and fMRI (summarised in Muñoz et al. 2019)—researchers may examine interpreters' brain areas, such as the amygdala and anterior cingulate volumes when faced by ideologically charged stimuli. Briefly, our tentative hypothesis awaits the collaboration of the 'two cultures' in interpreting studies and interdisciplinary methods for testing and refinement.

8. Conclusion

Through a close examination of the conference interpreting data in simultaneous mode taken from the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in China—a crucial international discursive event—this empirical study has reported on how Chinese interpreters achieve their ideological positioning with China/Beijing by altering evaluative language and censoring sensitive, pejorative discourse about China. The ST discourse is *de facto* 'edited' for the TT audiences, often during a cognitively highly demanding simultaneous interpreting.

We must acknowledge the limitations of using linguistic patterns in the interpreted

product to infer how interpreter ideology affects the cognitive operations occurring in the 'black-box' of the interpreter's brain. This indirect, refracted *modus operandi* can only offer partial indications for possible relations between interpreter ideology and cognitive operations. It is also impossible to determine whether this is a conscious or unconscious decision on the part of the interpreters. Despite this limitation, this study has pointed out future directions in which the possible relationship between discourse and cognitive processes could be further studied in controlled experiments using existing neuroscience methods already employed for studying cognitive operations in interpreting studies. In addition, future studies may also triangulate the results using post-task interviews.

A holistic, 'real-life' understanding of conference interpreting is only possible by integrating the discourse and cognitive dimensions of CIR. Corpus data collected *in situ* and ecologically valid conference settings offer invaluable sources for research. In particular, empirical data showing interpreters' editing of ideologically laden discourse could offer a useful new starting point. Harmonised views, methodologies, and theoretical accounts require further calibration to the complex reality of conference interpreting.

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