# Directionality and Error Typology in English-Persian Simultaneous Interpreting: A Descriptive-Analytic Corpus-Based Study

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ABSTRACT

Interpreting is generally recognized as a demanding cognitive task and is, therefore, likely to involve errors to a lesser or greater degree. These errors would certainly influence the quality of interpreting based on their weight. The present study is an attempt to conduct an error analysis on Persian-into-English and English-into-Persian simultaneous interpreting, as a way to assess interpreting quality, and to investigate whether directionality influences the proportion of the errors. To this end, six presidential speeches delivered at the United Nations General Assembly were selected. The initial 20 minutes from each speech as well as their interpreted versions were transcribed. The transcriptions were then scrutinized to identify and classify the possible errors based on the taxonomy proposed by Flores et al. (2003). The results revealed that the frequency of errors remained almost unchanged in both directions, that is, directionality did not affect the type and number of errors made. Following the data analysis, it was decided that the taxonomy proposed by Flores et al. (2003) could be modified to allow for better categorization of errors.

KEYWORDS: directionality; error typology; interpreting quality assessment; quality; simultaneous interpreting

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 Quality*

As simultaneous interpreting became internationally widespread as a medium of communication between people with different languages after the Nuremberg Trials, the topic of quality has

attracted the attention of practicing interpreters, trainers and researchers to the extent that research on quality is one of the most prolific research lines in interpreting studies. However, as Moser-Mercer mentioned, "it appears difficult to agree on an absolute definition of what should be considered quality in interpreting" (Moser-Mercer 1996: 44). Similarly, a report by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) describes quality as "that elusive something which everyone recognizes but no one can successfully define" (AIIC 1982: 1). The definitions provided by Kalina (2012) and Pöchhacker (2001) further confirm the above-mentioned statement regarding the different definitions of the notion of quality. To Kalina (2012: 134) quality refers to interpreter "reliability, compliance with principles of professional ethics, empathy and trustworthiness", while Pöchhacker (2001: 143) defines quality as a "successful communication among the interacting parties in a particular context of interaction".

This lack of consensus on the definition of quality may be due to the fact that it is viewed from various subjective perspectives including that of the users, the service providers, the interpreters themselves and their peers. For example, an utterance which is filled with anger is interpreted satisfactorily but different feedbacks may be received from different participants, the interpreter may highly praise it, but the receivers may be dissatisfied with it (Gile 2009: 39). However, there are a number of criteria which have received considerable agreement in the assessment of quality. Pöchhacker (2001: 413) highlights that "while the terminology may vary from one author or text to the other, concepts such as accuracy, clarity or fidelity are invariably deemed essential".

### *1.2 Quality Assessment*

According to Clifford (2005: 98), Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) and Interpreting Quality Assessment (IQA) stress quality as the central criterion among other professional criteria. Another distinguishing characteristic of research on TQA and IQA is that it "looks for quality in a tangible product, that is, in the actual translation or interpretation itself". Clifford (2005) believes that, compared to TQA, interpreting quality assessment is a more recently tackled issue, dating back to the 1990s. Still, the importance of working in this domain has the same value as TQA research.

Kalina (2005: 769) highlights the importance of interpreting quality and states that it needs to be assured. As simultaneous interpreting is a very complex and demanding task involving a diverse

range of capabilities (Mousavi Razavi 2020), interpreters cannot devote much attention to monitoring their output. Consequently, one cannot rely on the interpreter's own evaluation of their performance (Dejean le Féal 2008). IQA is a complicated activity that helps us recognize weak and strong points in interpreting quality (Kalina 2012). Furthermore, it helps us distinguish good quality from poor quality interpreting.

Any task of simultaneous interpreting inevitably involves certain errors to a lesser or greater degree. One of the ways to assess interpreting quality is to carry out error analysis. Identifying and analyzing errors is of great importance. This importance can be perceived both in interpreting practice and interpreting theory and research. The intent behind identifying and analyzing errors is not to find fault with interpreters but to better understand and recognize this complex phenomenon. When an important speech is being interpreted and broadcast online, it is observed by millions. In the same vein, Pöchhacker (2011: 23) asserts that "the performance of a single interpreter can reach thousands, if not millions of viewers and listeners". The quality of a given interpreting performance, therefore, is very influential in shaping public perceptions of interpreting one way or another. It can also influence political, social and cultural interactions.

An overview of the related literature on interpreting studies reveals that despite the central role of interpreting in interlingual, intercultural communication since earliest times, "its recognition as something to be studied and observed is relatively recent" (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002: 1). A comprehensive search through journals specializing in translation studies research in Iran and the dissertations written on simultaneous interpreting using the database of IRANDOC (Iranian Research Institute for Information Science and Technology) revealed that, so far, no research has been conducted to investigate the influence of directionality on error frequency in simultaneous interpreting. As for articles and dissertations written outside Iran, relevant databases, archives, and indexing bodies were thoroughly searched using the related key words. No research with the same topic and the same language pair (English <–> Persian) was found. Therefore, the novelty of this research is twofold: First, no empirical research has been conducted to investigate the issue of error typology and frequency in simultaneous interpreting between these two languages. Second, the possible effect of directionality on error typology and frequency is addressed in this study.

Using Flores et al. (2003) taxonomy, the present descriptive-analytic, corpus-based study aims at assessing interpreting quality by identifying and analyzing errors which may occur in Persian-into-English and English-into-Persian simultaneously interpreted presidential speeches delivered at the United Nation's General Assembly (UNGA). This study seeks to answer two main questions:

1. What is the frequency of each type of error in simultaneous interpreting based on the taxonomy proposed by Flores et al. (2003)?
2. Does the proportion of errors change when directionality changes?

## 2. Related Studies

Errors can be considered as beneficial tools in pedagogical settings, as the analysis of errors may lead to an understanding of the mechanisms underlying their occurrence. Crystal (2008: 173) described error analysis in language teaching and learning as "identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language". However, according to Gile (1985, as cited in Altman 1994: 25), compared to language teaching, applying error analysis to interpreting is more difficult. This difficulty lies in the "heterogeneity of the subject matter, presentation and other features of the source text, relevance to be assigned to intonation and other para-linguistic devices, the need to assess performance in the mother tongue as opposed to the foreign language, etc." Despite this difficulty, several researchers have conducted error analysis in a bid to assess interpreting quality.

One of the first researchers who conducted research on error types in simultaneous interpreting (SI) is Henry Barik (1971). He asserts that in SI, the interpreter's version may depart from the original speaker in three ways: some material may be added to or omitted from the text, or there may be a substitution of the material. In this category, if the substitution is considerably different from the original version, it is called an "error" (Barik 1971: 199). Therefore, additions and omissions are not considered as "errors" in Barik's terms, although he investigated them in his research. Despite adding different sub-categories for each category, he further notes that this classification is only a "general" one.

In 1994, Janet Altman conducted an error analysis in a pedagogical setting with the aim of predicting and preventing the production of errors by student-interpreters (Altman 1994). She examined the most recurring errors in SI by students and categorized them based on how successfully they communicated the speaker's message: omission, addition, inaccurate rendition of individual test items and distortion of longer phrases. Contrary to Barik (1971), Altman believes that omissions and additions made by the interpreter can distort the message to a considerable degree and are definitely considered errors. However, she critically states that the yardstick used to assess interpreting, that is, the successful communication of the speaker's message, is not necessarily the only "valid criterion" to conduct error analysis (Altman 1994: 37).

Focusing on pediatric meetings at an urban hospital, Flores et al. (2003) conducted an error analysis to measure the accuracy of medical interpreters. In their study, an error was defined as "any misinterpretation of an utterance that occurred in the clinical encounter" (Flores et al. 2003: 7). They used five categories to classify interpreters' errors: omission, addition, substitution, editorialization, and false fluency. The aim of their research was to determine not only the frequency of errors but the effects they might have on the interpreting quality. They also paid attention to the interpreters' experience and found that ad hoc interpreters made more errors compared to professionals. They further suggested that there must be more training to improve ad hoc interpreters' performance.

Drawing on Flores et al. (2003) error taxonomy, Anazawa et al. (2012) also conducted a study on errors made by Japanese-English interpreters in a simulated medical scenario. The participant interpreters were of different backgrounds. The results of the study, which was based on simulation rather than real-life conditions, showed that participants with less interpreting experience tended to make more errors. Participants' interpreting experience appeared to be a contributing factor to making errors. In terms of error frequency, omission-type errors occurred most frequently as was also the case in the study by Flores et al. (2003).

Shehab and Al-Maryani (2019) not only analyzed and classified errors in simultaneous media interpreting but also investigated the factors which might have led to those errors using Gile's Effort Model (2009) and Baker's Narrative Theory (2005). They classified errors into three main

categories: Lexical, syntactic and phonetic. Compared to previous studies, the categories in this research are more general and include other previously mentioned categories as sub-categories.

Although different language pairs were examined in these studies, none of them investigated the influence of directionality on error frequency. Apart from identifying and categorizing errors, one of the aims of the present research is to examine the influence directionality may have on error frequency. There are different viewpoints toward directionality in SI. Some scholars believe that interpretation into the mother tongue (language A) would be easier for the interpreter and more accurate (Seleskovitch 1978). On the other hand, the results of a study by Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002) showed that interpreters are more comfortable when interpreting from their A into their B language. However, the results obtained by Darò et al. show that interpreting into the B language "makes interpreters commit more errors that are generally considered to be the most serious ones" (1996: 112). Similarly, Kalina (2012: 137) highlights that "conference interpreters agree that the quality they provide is generally best when they work into their mother tongue".

The variety of opinions regarding directionality in SI provides further ground for the present study to examine this controversial issue in the English-Persian language pair.

## 3. Methodology

### *3.1 The Corpus*

A parallel non-automated spoken language corpus was compiled to identify and analyze interpreting errors. Thompson (2005: 59) defines spoken language as "any language whose original presentation was in oral form". To this end, six presidential speeches delivered by presidents of Iran and the United States at the UNGA were selected. The speeches were delivered between the years 2014-2018.

The results obtained from Farhan (2010) showed that source language speech delivery rates strongly influence the performance of interpreters: the slower the rates, the better the performance. Therefore, in order to keep time as a fixed variable and to measure the speakers' delivery rates, the initial 20 minutes from each speech as well as their interpreted versions were transcribed. The

whole corpus comprised 2 hours of speech and about 26 pages of transcripts. The corpus of the present study is bidirectional, hence, comprising the following two components: (1) the English-into-Persian component, and (2) the Persian-into-English component.

### *3.1.1 English-into-Persian Component*

The English-into-Persian component contains three presidential speeches delivered by presidents of the United States during the years 2016 to 2018 at the UNGA. The following table gives further information on this component.

Table 1: English-Persian Component

| Presidents | Speech Duration | English Word Count | Date of Delivery | Interpreters | Broadcast | Persian Word Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Obama | 00:20:00 | 2361 | September, 2016 | A | VOA | 2169 |
| Trump | 00:20:00 | 1903 | September, 2017 | B | Press TV | 1748 |
| Trump | 00:20:00 | 2082 | September, 2018 | A | VOA | 2370 |

### *3.1.2 Persian-into-English Component*

Similarly, the Persian-into-English component contained three speeches delivered by President Rouhani at UNGA in 2014, 2015 and 2017. All his speeches were simultaneously interpreted into English and broadcast from Press TV news channel by the same interpreter. The table below provides more information.

Table 2: Persian-English Component

| President | Speech Duration | Persian Word Count | Date of Delivery | Interpreter | Broadcast | English Word Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rouhani | 00:20:00 | 1940 | September, 2014 | C | Press TV | 2540 |
| Rouhani | 00:20:00 | 1930 | September, 2015 | C | Press TV | 2430 |
| Rouhani | 00:20:00 | 1690 | September, 2017 | C | Press TV | 2053 |

## *3.2 Rationale*

The principal reason for the selection of presidential lectures was that nowadays important speeches are regularly broadcast by TV channels along with their interpretation, each channel with their own interpreters, and both the original speech and several interpreted versions can often be found on the internet. Pöchhacker (2011: 24) highlights that television interpreting is an ideal tool for conducting empirical research in interpreting studies due to "the accessibility of public broadcasting content for the purpose of recording-based analysis". In addition to the availability factor, the importance of these speeches meant that professional interpreters were responsible for interpreting them, which further justified the selection of this corpus for the purpose of the present study.

## *3.3 Procedure*

The current research was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the corpus was compiled. The first step of compiling the corpus was to find the videos. Once the video files were downloaded, they were transcribed in order to be processed and analyzed. The videos were transcribed manually (which was by no means an easy task to carry out) and basic orthographic transcripts with certain linguistic and paralinguistic information were produced (Shlesinger 1998). For the original speeches, whether Persian or English, the full script of the speech available on the internet was utilized as a basis. Such speeches are normally not a verbatim reproduction of the written scripts; the variations and changes applied, willingly or otherwise, by the speaker were also taken into account. Therefore, tense changes, mispronounced words and ungrammatical structures were re-inserted once again while listening to the recordings. However, all target (interpreted) speeches had to be transcribed from scratch. No speech recognition software was used and it was done manually to ensure accuracy. After transcription, the recordings were checked and revised once again.

In the second phase, the source and target transcripts were compared and examined based on Flores et al. (2003) error taxonomy in order to identify and categorize the errors. The error taxonomy comprised the following five categories:

1. Addition: The interpreter adds unspoken words or phrases to the interpretation.
2. Omission: The interpreter does not interpret words or phrases that were uttered.
3. Substitution: The interpreter substitutes words or phrases.
4. False fluency: The interpreter uses words or phrases that are incorrect/non-existent in a particular language.
5. Editorialization: The interpreter's personal view is added to the interpretation.

The source and target transcripts of each speech were examined sentence by sentence to pinpoint the errors. The data was tabulated under three columns using Microsoft Excel: source transcript, target transcript, and error type. Then, the identified errors were bolded on the source transcript in the case of omissions, on the target transcripts in the case of additions, and on both in the case of substitutions, false fluencies and editorialization. The identified errors were then calculated, their frequency and the corresponding percentages were measured.

In the last phase, the obtained frequencies and percentages for the two components were compared with each other to see whether there was a noticeable change of error proportions with the change in directionality. The calculations were all done manually. The data analysis was done quantitatively as corpus analysis is usually a quantitative one. We used statistics and provided frequencies and percentages using tables and bar charts to answer the research questions.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### *4.1 The Whole Corpus*

The table below presents the frequency and percentages of each error type in the whole corpus.

Table 3: Total Frequency and Percentage of Errors

| Error Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Omission | 416 | 54.09% |
| Substitution | 259 | 33.68% |
| Addition | 70 | 9.1% |
| False fluency | 23 | 3% |
| Editorialization | 1 | 0.13% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 769 | 100% |

The patterns of error occurrences in this study diverge from those of Flores et al. (2003) who found the following error proportions: omission (52%), false fluency (16%), substitution (13%), editorialization (10%), and addition (8%). However, in terms of omission-type errors which were the most prevalent among all error types, the findings of this research were in line with those of Flores et al. (2003). Substitution errors were the second most frequent error types. Errors of addition, false fluency and editorialization were the third, fourth and fifth most common errors respectively. A possible explanation for these different error proportions might be the setting in which the interpreting occurred. This idea can be confirmed by the result found by Anazawa, Ishikawa, and Kiuchi (2012) who used the same error taxonomy in a simulated medical scenario to categorize errors. Their findings were generally consistent with those of Flores et al. (2003) and there was only one difference in the proportion of additions and editorialization ranking fourth and fifth respectively.

While Flores et al. (2003) conducted their study on medical interpreting, this study was carried out on media interpreting with a focus on politics. Media interpreting is normally broadcast live and is regarded as "one of the most difficult and stressful forms of interpreting" (Jiménez Serrano 2011: 115). Due to the importance and confidentiality of presidential speeches, all the interpretations in this study were done without text. This is further confirmed by the interview with interpreter C.

The high frequency of errors of omission can be attributed to the fast delivery rate which means a great amount of information is presented in a short period of time. Thus, the interpreter may fail to remember the whole utterance, and this might lead to leaving some sections of the speech uninterpreted. With reference to Altman (1994: 34), omissions may be due to "excessive concentration of a proceeding item due to processing problems, resulting in a lack of attention and hence omission". Sometimes, the interpreters omit some parts which they find redundant. This can be done as a strategy for "time management" (Pym 2008: 93). Other researchers, too, have referred to this type as "intentional" or "deliberate" omissions (cf. Korpal 2012; Napier 2004).

Substitution errors which ranked the second most frequent error type probably resulted from the interpreters' limited knowledge of vocabulary and phrases, or lack of understanding of the grammatical structures of the languages at work. When they did not find the exact word to use, they substituted it with another word or phrase.

Errors of addition which composed almost one-tenth of error proportion could be due to the interpreters' tendency to make information more explicit and explaining a certain word or phrase in another way for clarification purposes. According to Altman (1994: 34), adding a word or phrase to the target text may be "an attempt to improve the style, leading to a tendency to overstate the case or to embroider the text unnecessarily". In this study, the added material was found to have two main purposes: (1) elaboration, (2) filling out certain semantic gaps by adding extra information.

It seems that most of the false fluency errors had their roots in the interpreters' scarcity of source language knowledge or shortcomings in mastery of the foreign language. This led to producing incomplete structures and wrong lexical items which could not be found in that specific language. Interpreter A made the most false fluency errors which might be due to his lack of competence in Persian language.

Error of editorialization, which is defined as adding one's personal view to the interpretation, was the least frequent error type in this study. This result may be explained by the fact that in media interpreting and specifically with regard to the sensitivity of presidential lectures being broadcast live, interpreters try to avoid adding their personal viewpoint to the utterance. A deliberate, explicit manipulation of the source speech in such settings might bring about severe consequences.

## *4.2 English-into-Persian Component*

The English-into-Persian component of the corpus contained three speeches delivered by presidents of the United States (1 by Obama and 2 by Trump) at the UNGA and interpreted into Persian. The length of each speech was 20 minutes, measuring 60 minutes collectively. The verbatim source and target transcripts contained 12633 words. Table 4 illustrates the frequency and percentage of each error category per speech.

Table 4: Error Freqency and Percentage in the English-Persian Component

| Error Type | Speech 1 Error Frequency | Speech 2 Error Frequency | Speech 3 Error Frequency | Total Error Frequency & Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omission | 117 | 134 | 71 | 322 | 54.66% |
| Substitution | 91 | 76 | 35 | 202 | 34.29% |
| Addition | 18 | 19 | 9 | 46 | 7.80% |
| False Fluency | 8 | 3 | 7 | 18 | 3.05% |
| Editorialization | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.16% |
| Total | 234 | 233 | 122 | 589 | 100% |

Overall, the largest proportion of interpreting errors were omission-type errors. Substitution errors were the second most frequent, but errors of omission occurred almost twice as frequently as did substitution errors. Addition-type errors occurred eight times less than errors of omission. False-fluency errors and errors of editorialization made up the smallest proportion of interpreting errors, being 3.05% and 0.16% respectively. The last two error types showed a small variance.

### *4.2.1 Differences in Errors According to Speakers and Interpreters*

Among these three speeches, one was delivered by President Obama (speech 1) and the other two (speech 2 and 3) were delivered by President Trump. A notable point regarding the proportion of errors can be seen in speech 1 delivered by President Obama and speech 3 delivered by President Trump. Comparing the frequency of each error category in speech 1 with those of speech 3 revealed that despite being interpreted by the same interpreter (VOA's interpreter), more errors occurred in speech 1. A glance at the original speeches word count shows that in 20 minutes, President Obama uttered 2361 words while President Trump uttered 2082 words (see Table 1) meaning that the two presidents had different speech rates. This can further be explained by the fact that with higher rates of speech, the occurrence of the errors may also increase (Farhan 2010).

Considering the interpreters, it can be noted that the three speeches were interpreted by two interpreters (see Table 1). The first and the third speech were interpreted by interpreter A (VOA's interpreter) and the second speech was interpreted by interpreter B (Press TV's interpreter). Unfortunately, we do not have much information about interpreter A. All we know about him is that he is native in Persian and does not live in a Persian-speaking country. It can also be inferred

from the setting that he is an experienced interpreter or else he would not have been assigned to interpret the presidential speeches. However, interpreter B is known to us. He works for Press TV news channel and is an experienced interpreter from and into Persian.

Comparing the two interpreters, it can be seen that for interpreter B the proportion of omission-type errors were higher. An interview with interpreter B revealed the reason. He stated that he left most of President Trump's words uninterpreted since they were against his country, and he did not want to utter such words in his own country. Another interesting finding in this comparison was the high frequency of false fluency errors made by interpreter A. This finding can be attributed to the shortcomings in the interpreter's mastery of the target language (Persian). Also, the interpreters' place of living may have influenced the false fluency errors. While interpreter B works in the target language country (Iran), interpreter A works in the source language country. Interpreter B made 3 false fluency errors, while interpreter A made 15 false fluency errors.

## *Examples of Each Error Category*

**Example 1: Omission**

**ST**: We must protect our nations, <u>their interests, and their futures</u>.

**TT:** ما باید از ملتمون دفاع بکنیم.

[We must defend our nation]

The underlined part of the ST is left uninterpreted.

**Example 2: Addition**

**ST**: We reject the ideology of globalism, and we embrace the doctrine of patriotism.

**TT:** ما ایدئولوژی گلوبالیسم و جهانی شدن رو کنار می‌گذاریم و دکترین میهن پرستی رو <u>گرداگرد جهان</u> می‌پذیریم.

[We reject globalism and accept the doctrine of patriotism <u>around the globe</u>.]

Unnecessarily enough, the interpreter added 'around the globe' to his rendering.

**Example 3: Substitution**

**ST**: Almost $700 <u>billion.</u>

**TT:** هفتصد میلیون دلار

[7 million dollars]

In this example, the word 'billion' is substituted by 'million', which shows a statistically significant change, possibly with far-reaching economic and diplomatic consequences.

**Example 4: False fluency**

**ST:** Helping poorer countries leapfrog destructive forms of energy.

**TT:** کشورهای درواقع فقیر بتونن فراتر برن از تمام اموری که مخبر هست.

[Countries that are in fact poor can leapfrog all the issues that are *Mokhaber*.]

The word 'destructive' can be translated as 'Mokhareb' in Persian. The interpreter mistakenly uttered the word 'Mokhaber', which is very similar in pronunciation, but totally distorts the meaning of the utterance turning it into complete 'non-sense'.

**Example 5: Editorialization**

**ST:** As President Truman said in his message to Congress at that time, "Our support of European recovery is in full accord with our support of the United Nations".

**TT:** وقتی که رئیس جمهور ترومن اون موقع زمان خودشو داد و صحبت کردش راجع به اینکه اروپا می‌تونه از این مشکلات بیرون بیاد پس از جنگ جهانی دوم رو اشاره می‌کنم و تموم مشکلاتی رو که داشتیم ازش بگذریم بتونیم به تمام چیزهایی که بهش آرزو داریم درآینده برسیم.

[When President Truman talked about Europe being able to deal with these problems, I mean after World War II and we could deal with all the problems we had and reach all our dreams in the future.]

Editorialization error occurred only once in one of the target transcripts. In this example, the quoted phrase is replaced by a sentence, which is the interpreter's opinion and is not related to what is said in the original speech.

## *4.3 Persian-into-English Component*

The Persian-into-English component contained three speeches delivered by President Rouhani at the UNGA and interpreted into English. The length and duration of each speech is similar to the English-Persian component. The verbatim source and target transcripts contained 12583 words. Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage of each error type.

Table 5: Error Frequency and Percentage in Persian-English Component

| Error Type | Speech 1 Error Frequency | Speech 2 Error Frequency | Speech 3 Error Frequency | Total Error Frequency & Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omission | 39 | 37 | 18 | 94 | 52.51% |
| Substitution | 25 | 15 | 17 | 57 | 31.84% |
| Addition | 5 | 16 | 3 | 24 | 13.40% |
| False Fluency | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2.79% |
| Editorialization | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 69 | 71 | 39 | 179 | 100% |

Overall, the most frequent error types were errors of omission. Substitution errors were the second most frequent category, they occurred about 20% less than omission-type errors. Errors of addition and false fluency ranked third and fourth respectively. Finally, no editorialization error was encountered.

In this component, the three speeches were delivered by President Rouhani and were interpreted by the same interpreter (interpreter C, see Table 2). Interpreter C is an experienced interpreter who works for Press TV together with interpreter B. A comparison of the error frequency of the three speeches revealed that in the third speech, the interpreter made fewer mistakes. Since the speeches were delivered in different years, speech 1 in 2014, speech 2 in 2015, and speech 3 in 2017, it is hypothesized that the interpreter might have become more familiar with the president's discourse and enhanced his interpreting skills. In an interview with interpreter C, he asserted that the proposed hypothesis is wrong since their job is specifically concerned with this genre and was not something new. He believed that there might be different factors which may lead to such errors including interruptions during the interpreting process, technical problems in the headphones leading to poor voice quality or other hidden factors.

Another interesting finding in this component has to do with word count. With regard to Table 2, it can be noted that the word count in all three speeches increased to a significant extent in the interpreted version. This increase in word count is likely to be influenced by the English language structure which in some cases is longer than the same sentence in Persian.

## *Examples of Each Error Category*

**Example 6: Omission**

**ST:** تحکیم صلح

[Consolidation of peace]

**TT:** peace

In example 6, the underlined word is omitted. The word 'peace' is rendered in a correct way, but 'consolidation of peace' is far different.

**Example 7: Addition**

**ST:** این اشتباه راهبردی است.

[This is a strategic mistake.]

**TT:** This is a strategic mistake in our opinion.

In this example, the last phrase 'in our opinion' is added to the rendering for no good reason.

**Example 8: Substitution**

**ST:** میلیون‌ها مسلمان

[Millions of Muslims.]

**TT**: Lots of Muslims.

In this example, 'millions of' is substituted by 'lots of'. 'Lots of' refers to a general amount while 'millions of' is a more specific expression. This rendering has somehow generalized the uttered phrase.

**Example 9: False Fluency**

**ST:** هرجا که جلوی ضرر گرفته شود، منفعت است.

[Whenever a loss is prevented, it would be beneficial.]

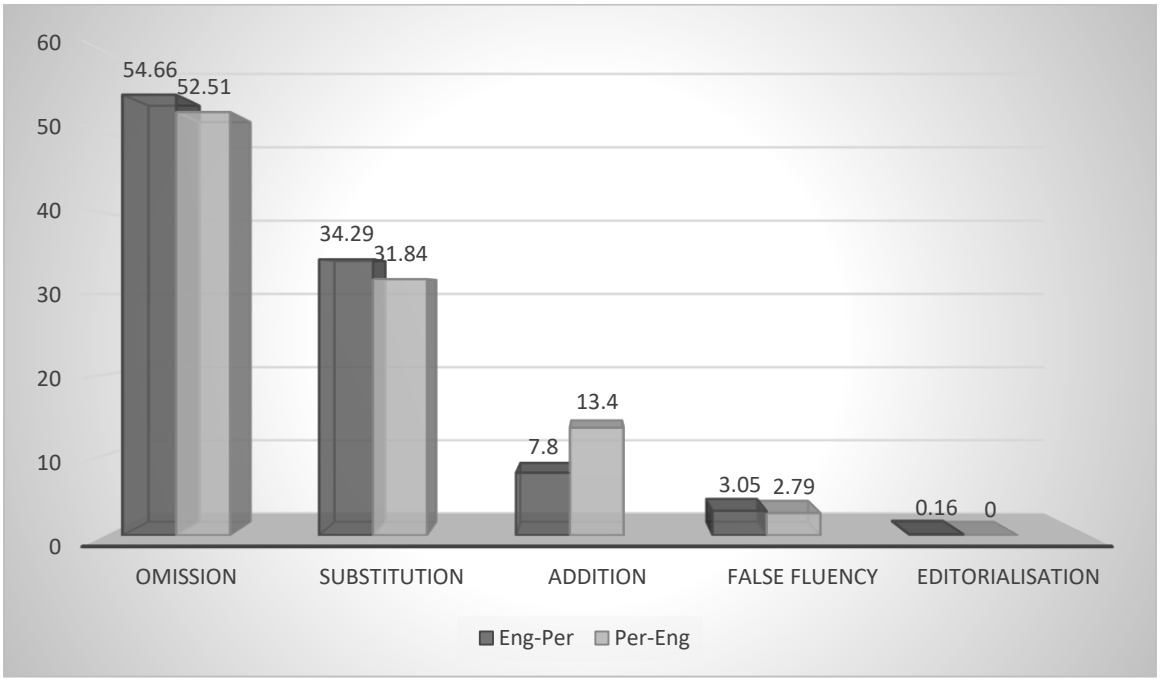
**TT:** Any time you stop a loss and then you will just reprofit.

The underlined word does not exist in English and can be considered wrong from a lexical point of view. It must be acknowledged, however, that this might as well be attributed to the interpreter's creativity. He might have tried to coin a word out of his imagination in a bid to beat the time pressure. After all, the boundary between what is and what is not an error is not always as clear-cut as one might desire.

## *4.4 Comparison of the Two Components*

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of the two corpus components (English-Persian and Persian-English) can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Rates of Errors in the Two Components



Overall, the largest proportion of errors for both components was dedicated to omission-type errors, with errors of false fluency and editorialization showing the lowest frequency. As can be seen in the bar chart, the order of frequency of error types remains the same in both directions of SI. Furthermore, the proportions of each error type in the two components are also very close to each other. Therefore, directionality in this specific language-pair did not influence the type and number of errors made by the interpreters. Research on other language combinations can help corroborate this finding.

## *4.5 The Taxonomy Modified*

While trying to identify and classify errors based on Flores et al. (2003) error taxonomy, a problem was encountered: We could not simply assign errors to a specific category, since the degree to which they influenced the communication of the message was different. Some of the errors distorted the messages to a considerable extent, while others left only a minor impact. This problem is further confirmed by what Moser-Mercer (1996) said regarding error scales. She believes that the scales must not only define different types of error, but also rank and weigh them appropriately. Bearing this in mind, we decided to consider 'the degree of semantic change' as a criterion to modify the taxonomy: the errors causing a major semantic change were categorized as 'major errors' and those leading to a minor semantic deviation from the source utterance were regarded as 'minor errors'. The following examples from the corpus are presented and explained to further clarify this distinction.

**Omission**

**Example 10:**

**ST:** The scourge of our planet today is a small group of rogue regimes that violate every principle on which the United Nations is based.

**TT:** ترجمه نشده است.

[Not translated.]

**Example 11:**

**ST:** After the recession, the top one percent of Americans were capturing more than 90 percent of income growth.

**TT:** بعد از رکود اقتصادی اون 1 % بالای جمعیت 90% رشد افزایش درواقع حقوقا رو می‌گرفتن

[After the recession, that one percent of the top of the population got 90% of income growth]

As is evident from these two examples, the omissions do not have the same impact on the communication of the message. In the first example, the whole sentence is omitted leading to a gross semantic change. However, in the second one, the phrase 'of Americans' is omitted, which does not distort the message greatly, since it is evident from the previous parts of the speech that the president is talking about American people. This omission, therefore, can be considered to be a minor error.

Pym (2008) also divides omissions into low-risk and high-risk. He maintains that low-risk omissions "can be made without jeopardizing the fundamental aim of the communication act" (Pym 2008: 93). This is exactly what is meant here by minor omissions.

**Substitution**

**Example 12:**

**ST:** It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with such a regime, but would arm, supply, and financially support a country that imperils the world with nuclear conflict.

**TT:** من فکرمی‌کنم جایی که جهان و تمام اینها درحال رویارویی‌ه و نهایتا ممکنه به جنگ هسته‌ای بیانجامه.

[I think the world and all of these are being encountered and it may finally lead to a nuclear war.]

**Example 13:**

**ST:** I stood before you for the first time in this grand hall.

**TT:** برای نخستین بار در این تالار بزرگ سخنرانی کردم.

[I delivered a speech for the first time in this grand hall.]

These two substitution examples show the different degrees of semantic change. In the first one, the interpreter has substituted the source sentence with a completely different sentence. This substitution has resulted in communicating a totally different message. It is, hence, a major substitution. In the second example, however, the phrase 'I stood before you' idiomatically denotes 'delivering a speech'. This substitution can be regarded as a minor error, since it did not cause a considerable semantic change.

**Addition**

**Example 14:**

**ST:** In this vein, we urge the United Nations-led peace process be reinvigorated.

**TT:** بنابراین مؤکداً از سازمان ملل متحد می‌خواهیم که این روند صلحی که پیش گرفته تقویت پیدا بکنه و بدونه که ایالات متحده پاسخ خواهد داد.

[Thus we strongly ask the United Nations that the peace process it has pursued be strengthened and they must know that the United States would respond to it.]

**Example 15:**

**ST:** ارائه طرح «مبارزه با خشونت و افراطی‌گری»

[Proposing the plan against extremism and terrorism.]

**TT:** The plan against extremism and terrorism, the wave.

The same procedure applies to additions. In the first example, a sentence has been added to the source text, resulting in a semantic change. Thus, it can be regarded as an addition with a major change of meaning. But in the second example, although 'the wave' was not mentioned in the source text, the interpreter tried to make the message clearer to the audience through elaboration. Therefore, this can be considered a minor addition.

**False fluency**

**Example 16:**

**ST:** امیدبخش‌ترین اقتصاد نوظهور جهان شود.

[It could become the most promising emerging economy of the world.]

**TT:** It could be hope and inspiring as emerging economy of the world.

**Example 17:**

**ST:** کانون صلح و توسعه

[A hub for <u>peace</u> and development.]

**TT:** A hub for development and <u>privace.</u>

Since the nature of false fluency errors was different from the previous three categories, the major/minor distinction did not apply: In example 16, the underlined phrase in the interpreter's rendering is syntactically wrong and non-existent in the target language. Meanwhile, in example 17, the word 'privace' uttered by the interpreter is meaningless and does not exist in the English language. Context makes it clear that the interpreter might have attempted, but failed, to recall the word 'peace', which bears phonological resemblance to the pronounced word. This is yet more proof that a huge amount of demand is placed on the interpreter's cognitive system.

Analysis of the above examples, and others in the corpus, led to a different sub-categorization of the errors in this category: 'syntactic' vs. 'lexical' ones: the error of false fluency in examples 16 and 17 are on the level of syntax and lexicon respectively.

Another challenge in working with this taxonomy was identifying instances of editorialization; it turned out that editorialization is not on par with the other four categories. It, rather, seems to encompass these categories, except for false fluency. This means that all other errors in the first three categories could be instances of editorialization depending on whether they were intentional or unintentional. When an addition, omission, or substitution occurs on purpose, then it stands to reason to argue that the interpreter has added their personal view to the interpretation.

Taking all the above points into consideration, it was proposed that the taxonomy be modified as follows:

1. Omission
    - Major
    - Minor
2. Substitution
    - Major

- Minor

3. Addition
    - Major
    - Minor
4. False fluency
    - Lexical
    - Syntactic

The modified taxonomy was used to analyze the data once again. The table below illustrates the frequency and percentages of each error type on the basis of the modified taxonomy.

Table 6: Frequency & Percentage of Errors Using the Modified Taxonomy

| Error Type | Omission | | Substitution | | Addition | | False Fluency | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Major | Minor | Major | Minor | Major | Minor | Lexical | Syntactic | |
| Frequency | 325 | 91 | 157 | 102 | 29 | 41 | 9 | 14 | 768 |
| Percentage | 42.31% | 11.84% | 20.44% | 13.28% | 3.77% | 5.33% | 1.17% | 1.82% | 100% |

The above table is related to the whole corpus. As can be seen, the frequency and percentages of major omissions and substitutions were higher than the minor ones by a significant margin. To better analyze the results, the two components of the corpus were analyzed separately.

Table 7: Frequency & Percentage of Errors in the English-Persian Component Using the Modified Taxonomy

| Error Type | Degree | Speech 1 Frequency & Percentage | | Speech 2 Frequency & Percentage | | Speech 3 Frequency & Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omission | Major | 91 | 38.8% | 123 | 52.7% | 46 | 37.7% |
| | Minor | 26 | 11.1% | 11 | 4.7% | 25 | 20.4% |
| Substitution | Major | 49 | 20.9% | 47 | 20.1% | 27 | 22.1% |
| | Minor | 42 | 17.9% | 29 | 12.4% | 8 | 6.5% |
| Addition | Major | 7 | 2.9% | 13 | 5.5% | 4 | 3.2% |
| | Minor | 11 | 4.7% | 6 | 2.5% | 5 | 4% |
| False Fluency | Lexical | 3 | 1.2% | 1 | 0.4% | 2 | 1.6% |
| | Syntactic | 5 | 2.1% | 2 | 0.8% | 5 | 4% |

Compared to speech 1 and 3, which were interpreted by the same interpreter (VOA's interpreter), it seems that interpreter B, had more major omissions and additions. It can then be concluded that compared to the other two speeches, the rendering of the second speech entailed a drastic change in the meaning of the source utterance.

Table 8: Frequency & Percentaged of Errors in the Persian-English Component Using the Modified Taxonomy

| Error Type | Degree | Speech 1 Frequency & Percentage | | Speech 2 Frequency & Percentage | | Speech 3 Frequency & Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omission | Major | **30** | **43.4%** | **26** | **36.6%** | **9** | **22.5%** |
| | Minor | **9** | **13.04%** | **11** | **15.4%** | **9** | **22.5%** |
| Substitution | Major | **16** | **23.1%** | **9** | **12.6%** | **9** | **22.5%** |
| | Minor | **9** | **13.04%** | **6** | **8.4%** | **8** | **20%** |
| Addition | Major | **1** | **1.4%** | **4** | **5.6%** | **0** | **0%** |
| | Minor | **4** | **5.7%** | **12** | **16.9%** | **3** | **7.5%** |
| False Fluency | Lexical | **0** | **0%** | **2** | **2.8%** | **1** | **2.5%** |
| | Syntactic | **0** | **0%** | **1** | **1.4%** | **1** | **2.5%** |

It can be observed that in this component, too, the major errors outnumbered the minor ones in most of the categories. The new taxonomy made it possible to classify the errors with more accuracy and certainty. Furthermore, it was possible to take into account the extent of the negative effects of the errors as well.

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

The results of the present study showed that omission was the most recurring error interpreters were likely to make, and that the type and proportion of errors was not affected by the directionality of interpreting in this specific language pair. However, we cannot claim with certainty that the same pattern would also be observable in other language pairs. As Mousavi Razavi (2018: 43) holds "these results cannot be fruitful unless studies of a similar nature are conducted time and again in different settings so that the reliability as well as generalizability of the findings improve incrementally". In this study, the error analysis method, and a relatively subjective error

classification, were used to assess quality, bearing in mind that other objective methods and criteria can also be utilized to conduct quality assessment. It would also be interesting to conduct similar studies in different interpreting modes and settings using interpreters with different experience, background, and gender.

The findings of this study may contribute to the larger body of research-driven knowledge in the field of interpreting studies by shedding light on language-pair-specific features of English-into-Persian and Persian-into-English simultaneous interpreting. This research may also have in-class applications. For instance, the trainers may focus on a specific type of error which occurs more frequently and seek to teach certain strategies to prevent the frequent occurrence of such errors. In fact, data from such research projects lends itself quite well to the continuing professional development (CPD) schemes as proposed by Taebi and Mousavi Razavi (2020), where the trainer and the trainee are expected to adopt a 'lifelong learning' approach. It can also have larger-scale implications in material development, curriculum and syllabus design, and interpreter trainer/assessor education. It may help prepare the ground for modifications in curricula for interpreter training programs at undergraduate levels and give material developers new insights on textbooks and other class materials.

The compiled corpus can also have pedagogical applications with regard to interpreter training and assessment. As for the former, trainers can use the source speeches to provide students with real-life assignments. As for assessment purposes, students may be asked to interpret a speech from the corpus, either in class or as an assignment. The students can record their performance and compare it with the corresponding professional interpreting available in the corpus. Such assessment can be in the form of self-, peer-, or instructor- assessment. This way, the students are exposed to authentic material and are offered useful demonstration of professional interpretation.

From the point of view of research on interpreting, this corpus can be used in future studies to investigate a variety of different issues: linguistic features of interpreted Persian and/or English, interpreting universals, socio-cultural aspects of English-Persian simultaneous interpreting in political settings, interpreting strategies used by professionals, to name but a few. This is especially

important when one considers the scarcity of the resources available, if any at all, for researchers in the field of interpreting studies in general, and English-Persian interpreting in particular.

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