Tanulmány

M. Rasoul Tayebi

Images Lost: Persian > English Simultaneous Interpreters Tackling Non-Literal Language

Abstract

This study explores the challenges simultaneous interpreters face when coming across non-literal language in the source utterance, such as metaphors, metonymies, and idioms. Non-literal language adds imagery to communication but seems to pose difficulties in the interpreting process due to its figurative nature. Simultaneous interpreters must navigate cultural differences and find appropriate equivalents while remaining agile with their cognitive capabilities in order to accurately convey the non-literal meaning into the target language in real-time. Simultaneous interpreters must analyze and interpret the utterance quickly while maintaining the production flow. Keeping track of the source utterance while taking care of the images getting transferred into the target production is not an easy task, for the fact that, according to Gile's effort model (Gile 1992), a simultaneous interpreter is already putting different required efforts in work, let alone rendering figurative items. Through this study, it appeared that non-literal items in language are not totally transferred into the target language; 95 non-literal items were extracted from 113 minutes of simultaneously interpreted UN political speeches, out of which 32% were replaced with their literal counterparts, added up with 16% being directly skipped, 9% of the items being unreplaced metonymies, and 10% of the items transferred while modified with a different image in the target production. Results in total, consist of 67% (almost two-thirds) of the items got lost or were thoroughly modified leaving only 33% (roughly one-third) of the non-literal items being transferred intact, which itself is a question raising phenomenon and evidence of problem triggering situations in the process of interpreting.
Keywords: non-literal language, figurative language, metaphor, metonymy, idiom, cognitive effort, simultaneous interpreting

1   Introduction

Non-literal language in interpreting seems to pose a significant challenge for interpreters due to various factors such as time pressure, cultural differences, and conventionalized metaphors. The complexity of deciphering and conveying the intended meaning behind non-literal expressions adds an extra layer of difficulty in the task of interpreting. This study aims to shed light on these challenges specifically in the context of simultaneous interpreting from Persian to English, highlighting the challenges involved in the interpreting process of non-literal language. The present study follows two main aims:

1. Identification of the Challenges: The study will provide a detailed understanding of the specific challenging expressions encountered by professional media simultaneous interpreters while interpreting non-literal language in the Persian-English language pair.
2. Strategies for Overcoming the Challenges: The study aims to identify frequent trends in the strategies that simultaneous interpreters employed to navigate the difficulties associated with interpreting non-literal expressions.

By addressing the challenges posed by metaphors, proverbs, metonymies, and idioms (henceforth non-literal expressions) an expected general outcome of this study is to contribute to improve cross-cultural understanding and communication. Accurate interpreting of non-literal language can bridge the gap between languages and cultures, facilitating effective communication in various contexts.

1.1 Interpreting studies and its research methods

Interpreting, also occasionally known as oral translation, refers to the process of conveying spoken utterance message from one language to another. Concerning the term "interpretation", it commonly connotes the act of comprehending and expressing the meaning and nuances of a text either written or spoken. Therefore, in this paper, I remain consistent with the term "interpreting". Salevsky (1993) distinguishes between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. In consecutive interpreting, segments of the source utterance are translated sequentially which allows for a certain degree of reflection and processing between segments. Simultaneous interpreting involves continuous translation of the source utterance in real-time. This research focuses on simultaneous interpreting, which demands a significant cognitive effort and relies on memory retention.

Initially, Holmes (1988) viewed interpreting as one of many objects within Translation Studies, but as research in the field grew and the unique characteristics of interpreting became apparent, scholars recognized the need for a distinct disciplinary entity. Salevsky (1993) identified key features that differentiate *interpreting* from *translation*, such as singular production of source-text segments, temporal restrictions, and the immediate realization of target-text segments. Salevsky's map of interpreting studies encompassed theoretical, descriptive, and applied domains, providing a framework for individual studies.

Venuti (2000) further emphasized the need for separate research coverage on interpreting, acknowledging its significant volume and specialized nature within Translation Studies. Subsequent scholars like Pöchhacker (2002) expanded on this work, offering comprehensive taxonomies for interpreting studies research from theoretical, descriptive, and applied perspectives.

As for the methodological challenges in Interpreting Studies, the field faces several intricacies due to its interdisciplinary nature and the complexities involved in studying the interpreting process. Some of the key challenges include:

- Access to Data: Obtaining access to authentic interpreting data can be challenging due to issues of confidentiality, privacy, and the sensitive nature of some interpreting assignments.

- Ethics: Interpreting involves human subjects, raising ethical concerns related to informed consent, participant confidentiality, and potential harm to interpreters or users in research studies.
- Observer Effect: The presence of researchers during interpreting sessions may influence interpreter behaviour, leading to biased results.
- Subjectivity: Interpreting can be influenced by individual differences among interpreters, making it difficult to generalize findings.
- Technology Integration: The use of technological tools and methods for data collection, such as eye-tracking or neuroimaging, requires specialized knowledge and can introduce technical challenges.
- Sample Size and Diversity: The limited number of professional interpreters and the diversity of interpreting settings can make obtaining a representative sample challenging.

To address these methodological challenges, researchers in interpreting studies have employed diverse research approaches. Researchers in this field come from diverse backgrounds, including translation, interpreting studies, linguistics, cognitive science, psychology, sociology, and communication studies. While the field has expanded in multiple directions based on disciplinary traditions, the primary goal remains obtaining reliable insights. Angelelli and Baer (2016) provide a thematic overview of topics and research methods in interpreting studies, addressing theoretical questions and various research approaches such as corpus-based studies, ethnographic research, interviews, focus groups, and observational research.

Napier and Hale (2013) offer a research methods volume specific to interpreting studies, providing practical guidance for the research process. Other volumes and special issues of academic journals focus on specific aspects of interpreting studies research, including language industry (Angelone et al. 2020), methodological challenges (Bendazzoli & Monacelli 2016), quantitative research methods (Mellinger & Hanson 2017), and cognitive translation and interpreting studies (Muñoz Martín & Xiao 2020).

Corpus-based studies involve analysing recorded and transcribed renditions from interpreters, exploring interpreter performance, behaviour, and quality (Shlesinger 1998). Survey-based research employs questionnaires completed by interpreters, interpreting trainees, or users of interpreting services, addressing various research questions, such as role expectations, quality expectations, and technology adoption (Crezee & Jülich 2020; García Becerra 2015; Bontempo & Napier 2011). Neuroimaging and physiological measures research have recently gained attention, allowing researchers to investigate the cognitive aspects of interpreting by examining cognitive overload, ear-voice span, eye movements, brain activation patterns, and physiological responses (Defrancq & Plevoets 2018). Thus, Interpreting Studies, like other fields of linguistics, is nowadays characterised by a diversity of methods. In this paper, I present observations that are corpus-based (see section 2).

1.2 *Theoretical framework: Gile's effort model*

However, interpreting studies (IS) has developed a lot in the last decades, not only metho-dologically but also theoretically. One of the most influential theoretical innovations has certainly been Daniel Gil's effort model (Gile 1992), which is the basis for the research presented here. Daniel Gile (1992) introduced the Effort Model with the aim of aiding

interpreters in comprehending the challenges associated with interpreting and selecting appropriate strategies and tactics. The model is built upon two fundamental ideas: Firstly, interpreting necessitates a certain level of mental "energy" that is available only in limited quantities. Secondly, interpreting consumes the majority of this mental energy and sometimes exceeds the available supply, resulting in a decline in performance (Gile 1995). The central concept of the Effort Model revolves around the processing capacity and the recognition that certain mental operations involved in interpreting demand a substantial amount of this capacity (Gile 1992). As each phase of interpreting requires effort, it is essential for interpreters to establish a harmonious balance among these phases in terms of energy allocation.

According to Gile's (2009) effort model, interpreting is a highly demanding cognitive task that involves several distinct types of effort. He identifies four main types of effort:

1. Listening Effort: This refers to the effort required by interpreters to accurately perceive and comprehend the source language message. It involves processes such as auditory perception, semantic processing, and syntactic analysis.
2. Analysis Effort: Once the interpreter has understood the source message, they need to analyse it in order to determine the most appropriate way to render it in the target language. This effort includes considering the context, cultural nuances, and specific terminology.
3. Production Effort: This refers to the effort required to produce the interpreting in the target language. It involves formulating grammatically correct and coherent utterances, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and organizing the delivery in real time.
4. Coordination Effort: Compared to "the air-traffic controller for the interpreting that takes place, allowing the interpreter to manage his/her focus of attention between the listening and analysis task and the ongoing self-monitoring that occurs during performance" (Leeson 2005).

Gile's model also takes into account several factors that can influence the overall effort involved in interpreting. These factors include the difficulty of the source message, the expertise and experience of the interpreter, the working conditions, and the available resources. Therefore, the given equation can summarize interpreting (I) as follows:

1) $I = L + M + P + C$

Here, L represents the effort put into listening and analysis, M represents memory, P represents production, and C represents coordination. The total requirements (TR) for interpreting can be expressed as:

2) $TR = LR + MR + PR + CR$

Hence, in order for the interpreter to smoothly carry out the interpreting task, the following conditions must be met:

3) $TA > TR$

where TA denotes the total available capacity. Consequently,

4) $TA > LR + MR + PR + CR$ (also referred to as the Tightrope Hypothesis by Gile 2009)

1.3   Non-literal items in the process of interpreting

Gile's theoretical model predicts that one of the biggest challenges in the interpreting process is the transfer of information units that consume a lot of energy. One such set of phenomena is the elements of non-literal language. Understanding a metaphor is often[1] difficult even in the source language, since it encodes information in a non-transparent way and can only be understood on the basis of prior knowledge that is also culturally encoded. Because of their cultural anchoring, transfer to the target language is also not necessarily possible in a direct way, i.e., the interpreter has to find a way around the encoded information in the target language. This process is extremely energy intensive, which makes this set of phenomena particularly important for interpreting research and particularly notable for testing the applicability of Gile's model.

In this study, I will refer to non-literal language as an essential aspect of human communication that adds depth, vividness, and imagery to our words, and which includes not only metaphors, metonymies but also other forms of non-literal expressions like proverbs and idioms.

I will not formulate an exact definition of the term non-literal language because there is no consensus in the literature how to define and differentiate literal and non-literal language use. But there is no such need either since my aim in this study is merely to present data to obvious cases of the challenge of interpreting non-literal language and to show that they form certain groups on the basis how they pose a challenge for interpreters in their work. Therefore, I will refer to non-literal language which can be described as a "figurative extension from another meaning" (Dancygier & Sweetser 2014: 4). By understanding a figurative extension, I rely on my take on the theoretical framework of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in identifying and interpreting non-literal language. By non-literal phenomena I mean groups of linguistic items labelled traditionally as metaphors, metonymies, including also proverbs and idioms based on metaphors and metonymies. For further theoretical and methodological issues concerning conceptual metaphors and metonymies and their identifying see among others Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), Csatár (2014), Tóth (2018), or Kövecses (2020).

From the aforementioned phenomena, it was metaphors that has been in the centre of attention for many decades. Scholars in the field of Translation Studies have been interested in and researching the topic of metaphor translation. Numerous researchers (e.g., Ogden and Richards (1923), Nida & Taber (1969), Dagut (1976), Newmark (1981, 1998), Van Den Broeck (1981), Toury (1985), Dagut (1987), Schäffner (2004) and many others have delved into the translatability of non-literal language. Dagut (1976) argues that it is inadequate to make a single generalization about the translatability of metaphor due to the complex factors that determine metaphor ontology. Mason (1982) emphasizes the need to approach each instance of metaphor translation individually rather than prescribing a set approach. Conversely, Van den Broeck (1981) suggests that rejecting the possibility of a theory of metaphor translation indicates the inadequacy of translation theory as a whole, as it should account for the translation of one of language use's most common phenomena.

Contrary to prescriptive approaches, scholars like Toury (1995) or Samaniego Fernández (2011) advocate for descriptive studies on metaphor translation. Toury criticizes theories

---

[1]   Some types of metaphor are easier to process whereas others pose a difficulty; most notably innovative, creative, non-conventionalized metaphoric expressions (See the extensive work of Gibbs in the psychologistic aspects of metaphor comprehension).

lacking a descriptive foundation, while Samaniego Fernández underscores the importance of describing and analysing actual renditions of metaphors rather than relying on theoretical hypotheses and personal opinions. According to Samaniego Fernández, many recommended translation procedures for metaphor translation are based on limited examples and fail to consider the diverse occurrences in real translation practice.

In the field of Interpreting Studies, research on non-literal language remains relatively scarce. However, the studies conducted often rely on the analysis of authentic data. Beaton (2007) concentrates on simultaneous interpreting at the European Parliament and observes that interpreters frequently employ similar metaphors in the target text when transferring metaphors from the source text. Spinolo and Garwood (2010) analyse interpreters' renditions in English-Spanish/Spanish-English and English-Italian/Italian-English combinations, highlighting the tendency to paraphrase lexicalized metaphors and translate creative metaphors literally.

While metaphor translation has received extensive attention in Translation Studies, research in Interpreting Studies remains limited. The demand for descriptive studies, focusing on authentic data and actual renditions of metaphors rather than prescriptive approaches, is gaining prominence. Existing research indicates that certain strategies for metaphor translation may apply across different language combinations, but further investigation is necessary to identify combination-specific strategies and trends. Overall, additional research is needed to deepen our understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in translating non-literal language, particularly in the context of interpreting.

2 Methodology of the study

2.1 Interpreting challenges

Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) presents unique challenges that require skilled and quick-thinking professionals. Firstly, the demand for real-time interpreting necessitates an instant comprehension and rendering of the speaker's message. Secondly, the interpreter must maintain focus and mental agility to sustain a high level of accuracy and linguistic precision. Thirdly, managing the flow of information while keeping up with the speaker's pace poses a challenge for uninterrupted interpreting. Additionally, coping with technical aspects like interpreting equipment and sound quality adds to the complexity. Lastly, cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions require cultural competence and adaptability to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate communication.

A considerable challenge that simultaneous interpreters often face with non-literal language is the speed of the source utterance; non-literal language is often used spontaneously and simultaneous interpreters must quickly process and interpret the intended meaning while maintaining the flow of the production. The need for immediate and accurate interpreting becomes even more crucial in situations such as political speeches, where every word carries a significant weight and it is more likely for the use of some non-literal elements to be intentional. This requires simultaneous interpreters to possess exceptional cognitive capabilities, linguistic agility, and the skill to make split-second decisions.

2.2   Data collection

To guarantee our access to the simultaneously interpreted material, I have looked for the live TV broadcasts of the source (English) speeches which were simultaneously interpreted into the target language (Persian). The direction of the interpreting is from English to Persian. Recorded simultaneous interpreting performances involving non-literal language and their transcriptions were collected. The data consists of real-life interpreting scenarios which are political and diplomatic speeches where non-literal language is used naturally as it normally appears in daily utterances.

2.3   Data Analysis

In order to fit the aims of the present study, the analysis has been conducted in a descriptive manner. The collected data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis is focused on identifying the specific challenges faced by interpreters dealing with non-literal language. Whereas the quantitative part also involves measuring and identifying the frequency and types of errors occurred during the process of interpreting non-literal expressions. For this, 113 minutes of video-recorded United Nations political speeches in English were collected along with the same duration of their live broadcast of Persian interpreted production. The recordings came from some YouTube channels' archives[2]. Out of the entire data set, a total of 95 non-literal/figurative expressions/items were extracted and compared to their counterparts in the target production. For a better comparison of the images in both languages, a word-for-word translation of the Persian interpreted item is provided.

The main aim of creating a mini-corpus for the sake of this study was to try to present a preliminary "working hypothesis" categorization of different possible non-literal elements in everyday language and to investigate the performance of the simultaneous interpreters confronting such non-literal uses of language in order to find out to what extent these phenomena may cause challenges for interpreters and stop them from being accurate and precise "enough". With regards to these challenging items, and in case we come across to a frequent trend in the strategies deployed by simultaneous interpreters, we are eager to find out how those trends could be grouped and listed. Concerning this, I suggest here six major working categories of frequent strategies of the interpreters to fit the data into. All these categories are based on inductive observations. The labels I applied in the analysis are the following:

---

[2] (Sep 24, 2019):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV2aZC2ySCg&list=PLeE7GAA7zqPxPh5NfuxAKiARkblxYjb-_&index=3

(Sep 24, 2019)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0p8KfsFXVc&list=PLeE7GAA7zqPxPh5NfuxAKiARkblxYjb-_&index=4

(Sep 20, 2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJzLC-AAWHw&list=PLeE7GAA7zqPxPh5NfuxAKiARkblxYjb-_&index=5

(Sep 20, 2016)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxpJgHMfLlU&list=PLeE7GAA7zqPxPh5NfuxAKiARkblxYjb-_&index=8

(Sep 21, 2022) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bThDV2g5Go

(Sep 21, 2022)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLLVeEgjlsI&list=PLeE7GAA7zqPxPh5NfuxAKiARkblxYjb-_&index=5

294

M. Rasoul Tayebi:
Images Lost: Persian > English Simultaneous Interpreters Tackling Non-Literal Language
Argumentum 19 (2023), 287–305
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó
DOI: 10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2023/14

- Image for image – same image;
- Image for image – different image;
- Literal for figurative;
- Skipped

And regarding metonymies:

- Metonymy lost
- Metonymy for metonymy

In terms of categorizing the non-literal items, I tried not to fall deep into theoretical diversions between different types and detailed distinctions of figures of speech, since it does not serve any specific need for the purposes of the present study which is supposed to be introducing the existing challenges and a question-raising project. That's why I stick to a primary level of categorizing non-literal items with the following labels:

- Simile
- Figurative item
- Cultural item
- Metaphor
- Metonymy
- Proverb
- Idiom

The most basic question is centered around the challenges faced by simultaneous interpreters when dealing with non-literal language. This inquiry involves exploring the nature of these challenges and their implications. Additionally, it delves into the transformations that non-literal expressions undergo during the interpreting process. This transformation process is a key aspect to be examined, shedding light on how the original non-literal expressions are modified or adapted during interpreting. Moreover, a crucial facet of this investigation is the identification and analysis of the strategies commonly employed by simultaneous interpreters to effectively navigate these challenges. These strategies play a vital role in preventing break-downs in the interpreting process.

In relation to these research questions, several hypotheses arise. Firstly, it is hypothesized that interpreters indeed face challenges while confronting non-literal language. These challenges could range from linguistic complexities to cultural nuances that make the inter-preting of non-literal expressions intricate. The second hypothesis suggests that non-literal expressions undergo a process of manipulation as they are interpreted, potentially leading to alterations that bring them closer to the target language's idiomatic expressions and structures. Lastly, the study hypothesizes that interpreters develop consistent patterns of strategies to avoid failures or interruptions during interpreting. These strategies can include techniques to quickly comprehend and rephrase non-literal language, ensuring a smooth and accurate interpreting process.

3 Discussion of the results

3.1 The qualitative analysis

In this section, I intend to delve more into analyzing the extracted non-literal expressions and discuss in detail what I have found significant so far worthy of paying special attention to. For this, I try to provide explanations for some selected examples from each category mentioned above in the previous section. Firstly, it is necessary to define the titles of the tables.

Items listed under the heading "English utterance" are the exact expressions articulated by the source speaker giving a speech in the United Nations General Assembelies. Following that, is the column under which I have elicited the so called "images" of that specific expression in the source language (English). Comes after those, the heading "Interpreted into Persian" which contains the interpreters' production in the target language, here Persian; the word-for-word translation of the interpreters' utterance is also provided. Following, is the column which contains the elicited "images" transferred into the target language via the interpreters' performance and choice of words.

Titled "Interpreter's strategy", is the column which involves my analysis and assessment of the interpreter's opt for a solution while confronting that particular non-literal element. The heading "Possible loss of information" is provided to show whether the interpreters' performance has led to any sort of information getting lost or not; this itself can be regarded as an error in assessing the interpreters' performance which is not the focus of this paper. And comes at last, the column which shows in what moment of the source speech did the non-literal item appear; this last column serves the need for referring to the original recordings, as well as some meaningful hypothesizing and explanations on the interpreter's performance; in the following discussion, time references are deleted wherever they were not relevant. A handful of the extracted items will be discussed below. Here, I draw the readers' attention to the first pair of examples:

3.1.1 Metaphoric items

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Interpreter's strategy	Possible loss of information	Time reference
1	rebels who **stirred** us **with passion**	Metaphor: THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS	N/A*	N/A	SKIPPED	YES	00:54
2	heroes who **emboldened** us **with courage**	Metaphor: THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS	قهرمان‌هایی که به ما حس شجاعت دادند heroes who **gave us a sense of courage**	N/A	Literal for figurative	NO	00:56

* N/A stands for NOT AVAILABLE

As it appears in the table above, the English speaker brings about two non-literal expressions within only a short time span of two seconds which both share the exact same metaphoric conceptualization of THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS. The interpreter's solution/strategy confronting the expression no.1 was a direct skip. It is worth mentioning that I do not intend to predict or give any explanation for the reason behind each strategy opted by the interpreters, but the main aim is to describe what has happened in practice and raise the questions and awareness for the possible causes of the phenomena.

In expression no. 2, the interpreter presented a literal sentence as the counterpart for the non-literal source utterance. In both cases, the source images either skipped or replaced by a literal form are considered to be missing in the target production; though in the latter case, the information still exists as compared to the former one where information has not been transferred at all. This could have happened based on the fact that even for professional interpreters, it takes a couple of minutes to get used to the accent and style of the speaker at the beginning of interpreting, and these expressions appeared at the very beginning of the speech (in the 1st minute).[3] Let us take a look at some other cases below:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
3	only a relationship built on common interest mutual respect and religious tolerance can **forge a better future**	Metaphor: THE FUTURE IS A CONSTRUCTION	رابطه‌ای که بر اساس احترام متقابل باشد، بر اساس تحمل و شکیبایی مذهبی باشد، و فقط بر اساس این است که ما می‌توانیم برویم جلو a relationship based on mutual respect, based on religious tolerance and patience; and that's the only basis that we can **move forward upon** it	FUTURE IS A PATH	NO	Image for image – DIFFERENT IMAGE

In example no. 3, what has occurred was some sort of modification in the "conceptualization". As it can be observed, in the metaphoric expression in the source utterance the FUTURE is conceptualized as a CONSTRUCTION; on the contrary, the image transferred into the target language is a conceptualization of the FUTURE AS A PATH where in as much as the interpreter's strategy was

---

[3] Nonetheless, another consideration is necessary to be explained here and that is the fact that I am not looking at interpreter's performance from a quality-assessment point of view; so there won't be a straightforward judgement of the production to see whether the missing item had caused any damage to the message transfer and if it violates any professionalism principles of interpreting practice or not.

297

M. Rasoul Tayebi:
Images Lost: Persian > English Simultaneous Interpreters Tackling Non-Literal Language
Argumentum 19 (2023), 287–305
Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó
DOI: 10.34103/ARGUMENTUM/2023/14

to reproduce the metaphoric form, but some modification was inevitable. As the researcher, I am a native speaker of Persian (TL), and from my intuition of the language and culture, the reason for this modification cannot be cultural, for the fact that, even if the interpreter was able to reproduce the CONSTRUCTION metaphor, it would still make sense and sounded natural in the target language; so there should be some other reasons for such an opt by the interpreter which requires more investigations; however, a probable explanation may be the fact that both the source and the target linguistic items seem to be colloquial forms and only the wording is different.

3.1.2 Metonymies

For a wider overview of the challenges regarding non-literal items, let us move on to some other instances:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
4	The end of the Cold War lifted the shadow of nuclear **Armageddon**	Metonymy: ARMAGEDDON FOR WAR	برای اینکه مثلا جنگ سرد پایان گرفته ..... Because, for example, the Cold War has ended…	N/A	YES	Metonymy lost

Here in example no. 4, the interpreter faces a culture-dependent metonymy in which the ARMAGEDDON, a religious biblical notion, stands for the notion of war. Providing a direct transfer of the term might have been very much confusing for the Persian audience according to their probable unfamiliarity with the background knowledge. As it can be noticed, the interpreter also skipped repeating the same term in the target production. Another example of a metonymic expression is captured in example no. 5:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted to Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
5	It starts with making the global economy work better for all people and not just for **those at the top**	Metonymy: In this context, "those at the top" stands for "the financial elite"	آغاز می‌شود با این که باعث شود اقتصاد جهانی نه فقط برای طبقه‌ی نخبه‌ی مالی بلکه برای همه کارا باشد It starts with making the global economy work for everyone, not just **the financial elite**	N/A	YES	Metonymy lost (Paraphrased)

Paraphrasing is considered a common strategy in the realm of translation and interpreting. In the example above, the interpreter has also opted for such a solution confronting a metonymic expression in which *those at the top* stands for *the financial elite* and from what we can observe in the target rendition the full and paraphrased form has appeared.

Among entire metonymic items extracted from the data, metonymies are either totally skipped or paraphrased; there is only a single case in which the interpreter replaced a metonymy of the source utterance with a metonymy in the target language. Let us take a more detailed look at it below:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
6	This includes permanent **seats** for those Nations we've long supported, and permanent seats for countries in Africa, Latin America and Caribbean	Metonymy: "Seat" for membership	و این معنایش این است که صندلی‌های دائمی ارائه خواهد شد برای برخی از کشورهایی که در آفریقا هم هستند، در آمریکای لاتین و کارائیب And this means that permanent **seats** will be offered for some countries that are also in Africa, in Latin America and the Caribbean.	Metonymy: "Seat" for membership	NO	Metonymy for metonymy

It may not be wrong to claim that either the interpreter had consciously opted for the same metonymy in the target language or it was just a literal translation which resulted in the same metonymic rendition, what we have at the end is a precise transfer of the metonymy, and as mentioned earlier, was an absolutely rare case where a metonymy is replaced with an exact counterpart.

3.1.3   Proverbs

One of the major categories I suggest in this study is the occurrence of proverbs in the source utterance. Here, I will elaborate on three different scenarios I extracted from the data set in order to expand the perspective of the subject:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
7	But we have to **put our money where our mouths are**	Proverb: to take action in order to do something effective	ولی باید عمل بکنیم به وعده‌هایمان But we have to put into practice, our promises	N/A	YES	Literal for figurative-proverb paraphrased

Example no. 7 is an illustration of the case where the interpreter has reached for a literal rendition of the source proverb. As presented above, the proverb *putting the money where sb's mouth* is connotes taking an effective required action with regards to a situation. The target rendition lacks the image of the source utterance; it is caused by the interpreter's performance where he paraphrased the proverb. There is also a case where another strategy was opted:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
8	That can do more **to offer a hand**	Proverb: To help	دست مودت بیشتری دراز بکنند **Reach out a helping hand** more	To help	NO	Image for image (Proverb for proverb) – same image

No. 8, perfectly shows a case where a proverb was replaced with a proverb in the target language and it happens to be the same proverb as well. Once again, this could be the result of a direct translation or availability of the same proverb in the target culture. Of course, it is obvious that a direct translation may not always lead to a precise transfer of an item; regarding this, let us consider the following example:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Possible loss of information	Interpreter's strategy
9	That should make **your blood run cold**	Proverb: to cause one to shiver from fright or horror	این امر باید کاری بکند که خون شما سرد بشود This should make **your blood run cold**	Same image but nonsense in the target language.	YES	Word-for-Word translation;

In no. 9, a word-for-word translation strategy was opted and as the result, the target rendition does not make any sense in the target language where "blood running cold" cannot be interpreted without a confusion of the intended meaning. This is an interesting example illustrating that not always having the same image in the target rendition can lead to the same semantic intention as that of the source utterance.

3.1.4 Idioms

Here, I have presented a couple of idiomatic expressions in order to find out how these items have gone through the interpreting process; in these specific cases, time references seem relevant again:

No.	English utterance	Source image in English	Interpreted into Persian	Transferred image into Persian	Interpreter's strategy	Possible loss of information	Time reference
10	Trying to **pin the blame** for the food crisis **on** the sanctions	IDIOM To attribute a result to a certain reason	میخواهد در حقیقت بگوید که بحران غذا به تحریمها برمیگردد He actually wants to say that the food crisis **is due to** sanctions	N/A	Literal for figurative	YES	14:20
11	And **walking away** hurts the entire world	IDIOM To avoid participation	اگر .... به همهی دنیا آسیب میزند If .... it harms the whole world	N/A	SKIPPED	YES	20:05

In example no. 10, the interpreter did not succeed to fully transfer the idiom into the target language and may have had no other choice but to go for a literal rendition of the idiom; so, it may sound safe to say that the image we see in the English utterance is not present in the target reproduction, making it flat and neutral.

An interesting case is the one in no. 11, where we observe a clearly inconsistent rendition in the target production. Not only the non-literal item, being an idiom, is totally lost, but also the target utterance is fully scrambled and lacks syntactic and semantic consistency. A hypothetic claim might be built based on an unwritten principle in professional conference simultaneous interpreting, which considers the fact that simultaneous interpreters are better to switch turn with their boothmates within 20-30 minutes of constant interpreting to avoid reduction of efficiency and probability of error occurrence due to fatigue (cognitive overload/saturation) effect. Keeping this in mind and taking another glace at the time references, it might be cautiously claimed, unsuccessful non-literal rendition can possibly be related to some non-linguistic reasons, such as fatigue or cognitive overload; though it requires a specific investigation to take a closer look at such phenomena. For the scope of this research, some samples of the challenging non-literal elements were illustrated and now we shall move on to some quantitative representations in the following section.

3.2 The quantitative analysis

Trying to keep the discussion short and present a more quantifiable explanation of my study, we shall move on to some statistical measures below. As illustrated in the schematic Table 1, out of 95 non-literal items extracted from the data, the major part belongs to metaphoric expressions with 71 items, which is a considerable amount of 75% of the whole data set. The second most frequent non-literal items are metonymies (15 items, almost 16% of the total data set). The remaining cases include idioms, proverbs, cultural items and a single occurrence of a simile, which all together constitute 9% of the data. For a better and more concise illustration, it is worth taking a glance at the figures below:

Out of 95 items

- 3 – proverbs (3%)
- 1 – simile (1%)
- 2 – cultural items (2%)

- 71 – metaphors (75%)
- 15 – metonymies (16%)
- 3 – idioms (3%)
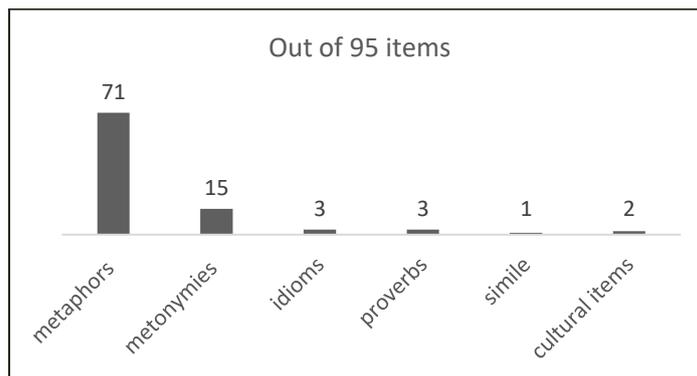
Table 1. Non-literal items

Regarding the categorization of the strategies employed by the interpreters, it turns out that out of 95 non-literal elements, the interpreters have rendered 30 literally (32% of all non-literal items), into the target language thus they lost their non-literal/figurative nature. On the contrary, another 30 items were transferred while keeping the same image. Thirdly, 16% of the items were directly skipped, (15 non-literal items). Lower than this number are the items which were transferred while keeping their non-literal images, but with the consideration of them being transferred into a different image (10% of the data set). Also 9 of the metonymies were totally lost; and the only exception was the one which happened to be replaced with the same metonymy in the target language. A general overview of the data is provided in Table 2 below:

Out of 95 items

- 30 - Literal for figurative
- 9 - Metonymy lost
- 1 - Metonymy for metonymy

- 15 - Skipped
- 30 - Same image
- 10 - Different image
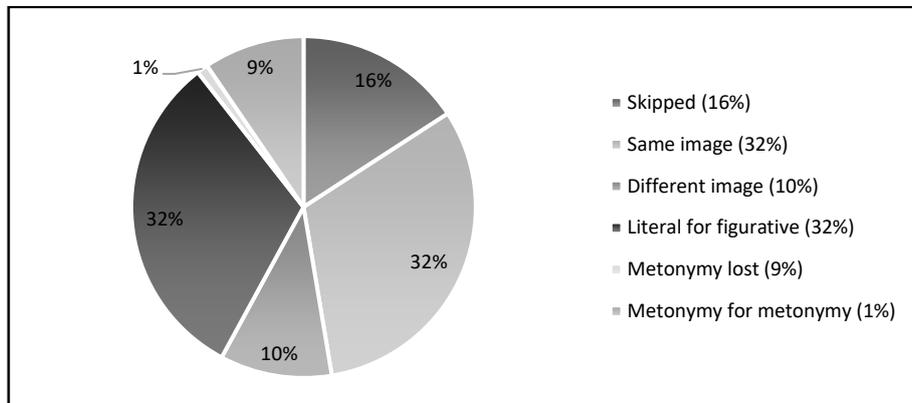
Table 2. Strategies

4   Limitations and future perspectives

The present study has focused specifically on the Persian to English interpreting direction. The opposite direction was yet beyond the scope of the present investigation due to the fact that there is a meaningful lack of data in the latter direction, since live simultaneous interpreting from Persian into English is hardly accessible freely. It appears that from Persian to English, the media was previously provided by the speeches' texts, therefore live broadcasts were more like news anchors reading out prewritten texts rather than real-time simultaneously interpreted speeches.

In some further research projects, non-literal items could be analyzed and assessed with regards to their more precise categorizations from a theoretically more well-founded perspective to see whether there is a significant difference in interpreters' strategies confronting various types of non-literal language and whether a certain type of non-literal language triggers poses difficulties for the interpreters or not.

5   Conclusion

To conclude, let us review the results once again. Considering the fact that almost two-thirds (67%) of the extracted non-literal items were not precisely transferred into the target production, might encourage one to claim that the first hypothesis is seems to be true: non-literal language poses a considerable challenge for simultaneous interpreters.

Furthermore, based on the results achieved it is not unreasonable to introduce the notions of "skipping", "literal translation", and "modifying" the source images and to posit them as the main trends in the strategies of interpreters deployed, most probably, in order to maintain the flow of their productions and to reduce the cognitive load which they are handling every second.

As discussed in the analysis section, there were 95 non-literal items extracted from 113 minutes of data, which makes the mean of a non-literal language encounter to be slightly more than one in every minute which seems to be a considerable amount of non-literalness in utterances produced in diplomatic context, thus this finding reinforces the necessity for such awareness raising studies.

All in all, it is safe to say that simultaneous interpreting requires quick thinking and immediate delivery of the interpreted message. Non-literal language often requires additional time for interpreting as it involves deciphering figurative expressions and grasping their underlying meanings. The time constraint adds pressure to the interpreter, increasing the likelihood of errors or misinterpreting. Non-literal language is deeply rooted in culture, and each language has its own set of figurative expressions. Cultural bounded items can be particularly challenging for interpreters as they may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Transferring culturally specific elements accurately while preserving their intended meaning poses a significant hurdle. Additionally, over time, certain metaphors and idioms become conventionalized within a language community. Interpreters need to be aware of these conventionalized expressions and be able to recognize them in the source language and convey their intended meaning in the target language. Failure to recognize and appropriately interpret conventionalized non-literal language can lead to confusion and miscommunication.

References

Angelelli, C. V. & Baer, B. J. (2016): *Researching translation and interpreting.* London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315707280

Angelone, E. e. (2020): *The language industry: Quantitative and qualitative perspectives.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Beaton, M. (2007): *Intertextuality and ideology in interpreter-mediated communication: The case of the European Parliament.* PhD dissertation. Heriot-Watt University Edinburgh.

Bendazzoli, C. & Monacelli, C. (2016): *Addressing Methodological challenges in interpreting research.* Newcastle upon Tyne UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Christopher D. M. & Thomas A. H. (2017): *Quantitative research methods in translation and interpreting studies.* London/New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315647845

Crezee, I. & Jülich, S. (2020): A survey study of role expectation in community interpreting: Perceptions and training needs. *Translation and Interpreting* 12(2), 1–20. Sydney: Western Sydney University.

Csatár, P. (2014): *Data Structure in Cognitive Metaphor Research.* Berlin, New York: Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/978-3-653-04450-8

Dagut, M. (1976): Can metaphor be translated? *Babel* 22(1), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.22.1.05dag

Dagut, M. (1987): More about the translatability of metaphor. *Babel* 33(2), 78–83. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.33.2.06dag

Dancygier, B. & Sweetser, E. (2014): *Figurative Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

García Becerra, I. (2015): Quality expectations and job satisfaction in conference interpreting. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 9(3), 376–393.

Gile, D. (1992): Basic Theoretical Components in Interpreter and Translator Training. In: Dollerup, C. A. (ed.): *Teaching Translation and Interpreting: Training, Talent and Experience*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/z.56.29gil

Gile, D. (1995): *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training.* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.8(1st)

Gile, D. (2009): *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.8

Holmes, J. S. (1988): *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kövecses, Z. (2020): *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108859127

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980): *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leeson, L. (2005): Making the effort in simultaneous interpreting: Some considerations for signed language interpreters. In: Janzen, T. (ed.): *Topics in Signed Language Interpreting: Theory and Practice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 51–68. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.63.07lee

Mason, K. (1982): Metaphor and translation. *Babel* 28(3), 140–149. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.28.3.05mas

Metzger, M. (2006): *Sign language interpreting: Deconstructing the myth of neutrality. Multilingual Matters.* Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

Muñoz Martín, R. & Xiao, R. Z. (2020): Cognitive translation and interpreting studies. New York: Routledge.

Napier, J. & Hale, S. (2013): *Research methods in interpreting: A practical resource*. London, New York: Bloomsbury.

Newmark, P. (1981 [1984]): *Approaches to translation.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Newmark, P. (1998): *A Textbook of Translation.* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Nida, E. & Taber, Ch. (1969 [1982]): *The theory and practice of translating.* Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Ogden, Ch. & Richards, I. (1923 [1960]): *The meaning of meaning. A study of the influence of language upon thought and of the science of Symbolism.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pöchhacker, F. (2016): *Introducing Interpreting Studies.* 2nd ed. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649573

Pöchhacker, F. & Shlesinger, M. (eds.) (2002): *The Interpreting Studies Reader.* London, New York: Routledge.

Salevsky, H. (1993): Theoretical Characteristics of Interpreting Studies. *Target* 5(2), 151–164. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.5.2.03sal

Samaniego Fernández, E. (2011): Translation Studies and the Cognitive Theory of metaphor. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 9(1), 262–279. https://doi.org/10.1075/rcl.9.1.12sam

Schäffner, C. (2004): Metaphor and translation: some implications of a cognitive approach. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36, 1253–1269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2003.10.012

Shlesinger, M. (1998): Corpus-based Interpreting Studies as an Offshoot of Corpus-based Translation Studies. *Meta 43* (4), 486–493. https://doi.org/10.7202/004136ar

Spinolo, N., & Garwood, C. J., (2010): To kill or not to kill: Metaphors in simultaneous interpreting. *Forum* 8(1), 181–211. https://doi.org/10.1075/forum.8.1.08spi

Tóth, M. (2018): *Linguistic Metonymy: Implicitness and Co-Activation of Mental Content.* Berlin, New York: Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/b14806

Toury, G. (1985): A rationale for descriptive translation. In: Hermans, T. (ed.): *The manipulation of literature*. Sydney: Croom & Helm, 63–86.

Toury, G. (1995): *Descriptive translation studies and beyond.* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.4

Toury, G. (1995 [2012]): *Descriptive Translation Studies – And Beyond*. Revised ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.100

Van Den Broeck, R. (1981): The limits of translatability exemplified by metaphor translation. *Poetics Today* 4(2), 73–87. https://doi.org/10.2307/1772487

Venuti, L. (2000): *The Translation Studies Reader*. Oxon/New York: Routledge.

M. Rasoul Tayebi
University of Debrecen
Doctoral School of Linguistics
H-4002 Debrecen
Pf. 400
mr.tayyebi72@gmail.com