

Exploring Interpreter Ideology through Appraisal Shifts: UN Interpreting in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ongoing geopolitical dispute of global attention where competing ideologies are articulated and negotiated, particularly at the United Nations. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the role of interpreters' ideology within the conflict through a discourse analysis of four United Nations Security Council conferences on the Palestine Question. Drawing on a combined framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and Appraisal Theory, the study first quantifies patterns of lexical, semantic, and polarity shifts in the interpreting for both Israeli and Palestinian speakers. Log-likelihood and Log-ratio algorithm are then applied to measure the differences between the two groups. Lastly, the ideological factors underlying these shifts are explored from cognitive, social, and discursive perspectives. The results reveal distinct patterns: interpreting for Israel tends to involve mitigation strategies, including downscaling force, softening focus, and weakening negativity. In contrast, interpreting for the State of Palestine shows an opposite trend with upscaling force, sharpening focus, and strengthening negativity. These suggest that interpreters may subtly shape narratives by promoting peace and dialogue in a tense international setting. However, they are also influenced by institutional and national ideologies, as interpreters are expected to perform under the guidelines of their home countries and the organizations they represent. By highlighting the multifaceted role of interpreters in conflict settings, this study sheds light on interpreters' operation within complex interplay of language, conflict, and ideology.

Keywords

Appraisal Shifts, Conflict Interpreting, Critical Discourse Analysis, Interpreter Ideology, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

1. Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the most protracted geopolitical disputes, remains a source of ongoing trauma nearly a century long, making it a crucial subject for discourse analysis (Assaiqeli, 2020). This interplay between geopolitical dynamics and linguistic mediation underscores the importance of analyzing interpreters' discursive strategies, which can reinforce or challenge prevailing ideological frameworks (Baker, 2018; Beaton, 2016). Within United Nations meetings, interpreters play a crucial role in shaping the narratives of various parties, potentially influencing how listeners perceive ongoing conflicts. Given the high stakes and the impact of these discussions, it is of importance to examine the dynamics of conflict interpreting in such politically charged settings. The existing research on conflict interpreting often centers on interpreters working in conflict zones, with rare attention devoted to the influence of interpreters' ideological positions in the UN settings, where leaders convene outside the immediate geographical conflict zone. Such settings introduce a unique dimension, as interpreters must navigate not only the linguistic challenges but also the ideological complexities of representing divergent political stances in an international arena.

The study draws on van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory (1998; 2006; 2008) of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that combines linguistics, sociology, and cognitive psychology to examine the relationship between discourse and power. The Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) is also employed to analyze how interpreters' lexical choices reflect ideological positions, within which the Graduation system is of particular interest, as it captures the dynamic variation of appraisal intensity in the interpreting process. The study aims to explore the influence of interpreter ideology on the discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the UNSC. Specifically, it investigates the shifts in appraisal language when interpreting for Israel and the State of Palestine, analyzing whether interpreters unconsciously align with the ideological positions of their home country or the institution they represent. To provide a more nuanced analysis, statistical algorithms such as Log-likelihood and Log-ratio are applied to measure the significance of the annotated evaluative shifts. By combining discourse analysis with statistical methodology, this study sheds light on how interpreters, often perceived as neutral, act as mediators of ideology, subtly influencing conflict narratives through their lexical and semantic choices. Hence, this study focuses on the following questions:

- (1) While interpreting for Israeli and Palestinian speakers, how do interpreters shape the discourse of the two parties? Are the patterns similar or different?
- (2) How is interpreter ideology manifested through shifts of graduation resources?
- (3) What are the possible reasons behind such ideological constructions?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Interpreter and Ideology

Van Dijk (1998; 2006; 2008; 2016) defines ideology as "group-shared belief

systems for promoting interests and guiding social and political practices”, and argues that ideologies are typically generated and reinforced through discourse. He proposes positioning ideology within a multidisciplinary framework that combines social, cognitive and discursive components (van Dijk, 2006). Through these three dimensions, van Dijk links social context to discourse by means of social cognition, broadening the scope of ideology-related studies. In the context of interpreting, it is considered that language “reproduces” ideology (Simpson, 1993). To better explore the features of ideological discourse, van Dijk (2016) proposed the theory of Ideological Square, which amplifies the positive attributes of the ingroup and the negative attributes of the outgroup, while downplaying the positive attributes of the outgroup and the negative attributes of the ingroup (van Dijk, 2016). Building on this framework, scholars further argue that interpreter ideology primarily encompasses four elements: national affinity or nationalism (Anderson, 2006; Wodak et al., 2009), professional norms and ethics (Skaaden, 2019; Kunreuther & Rao, 2023), interpersonal mediation (Gu & Tipton, 2020; Tipton, 2016), and individual identity and positioning (Munday, 2015; Wang, 2018; Dong, 2023).

The understanding that interpreting is an ideologically infused practice is grounded in the theories of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which highlight how power and ideology are embedded in all forms of communication (Fairclough, 2013a). In interpreting contexts, the transmission of meaning is rarely ideologically neutral, as interpreters often work within institutional or socio-political frameworks that inherently carry power imbalances (Baker, 2018). In fact, Baker (*ibid.*) argues that interpreters inevitably shape the ideological tone of interactions, even in their attempts to adhere to professional norms of neutrality. Pöchhacker (2006) expands on this by emphasizing that interpreting is a fundamentally social activity, deeply embedded in its specific contexts. This perspective challenges traditional views of interpreters as invisible intermediaries, suggesting instead that their work is conditioned by institutional ideologies and societal norms. Thus, the very act of interpreting involves ideological choices, whether conscious or unconscious.

The impact of ideology is particularly evident across different modes of interpreting. In conference interpreting, the use of evaluative language often reflects the interpreter’s alignment with institutional ideologies. Munday (2015) explores how interpreters utilize engagement and graduation resources to position themselves in relation to the source text. By calibrating intensity and stance, interpreters can either reinforce or moderate the ideological undertones of discourse, illustrating the complexity of positioning in multilingual political settings. In community interpreting, the ideological dimensions often come to the forefront in interactions between marginalized communities and institutional representatives. As Hale (2007) observes, interpreters in legal or healthcare settings frequently encounter ethical dilemmas, balancing professional codes of impartiality with the need to advocate for vulnerable clients. Such conflicts underscore the complex interplay

between ideology, ethics, and professional practice in these contexts. Likewise, public service interpreting in politically sensitive settings—such as asylum hearings—illustrates how interpreters navigate competing ideological demands. According to Inghilleri (2013), interpreters in these scenarios often operate under significant institutional constraints, which shape their ability to represent the interests of asylum seekers effectively. Inghilleri highlights how these constraints can lead interpreters to adopt roles that are either complicit in or resistant to dominant ideological structures.

The exploration of ideology in interpreting studies underscores the interpreter's central role as a socio-political actor whose work is deeply embedded in structures of power and ideology. Over the past few decades, scholars have examined interpreter ideology from the above perspectives, suggesting that interpreters do not merely adhere to institutional tenets and guidelines as previously believed, instead, they respond to cues embedded in the text that guide them in specific directions, prompting the application of their own ideological framework during the interpreting process (Fairclough, 2013b; Beaton, 2016; Wang & Feng, 2018; Gao & Munday, 2023). This growing body of research highlights the need for further inquiry into how interpreters can balance their professional responsibilities with the ideological challenges inherent in their work. Nonetheless, few studies have investigated interpreter ideology through the lens of evaluative meanings derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics, where interpreters' lexical choices reflect their stance and socio-political influences (Munday, 2007).

2.2. Interpreting Amidst Conflicts

Interpreting in conflict settings have received considerable scholarly attention in recent years (Collier, 2010; Baker, 2010; Vieira, 2014; Ruiz Rosendo, 2021). As a field involving multiple stakeholders where language, power, and identity are closely intertwined, it is widely recognized that interpreters combine their language skills and professional affiliations to assume the role of mediators (Wallmach, 2014). Current studies tend to focus on war interpreting, particularly when the interpreter is a professional recruited by either side of the warring parties for “security clearance” to ensure the desired professionalism and proven loyalty to the army (Kujamäki & Footitt, 2019). Under these circumstances, interpreters may often find themselves caught between professional ethics and geo-political factors such as identity and ideology (Nord, 2014; Chesterman, 2001). This has been witnessed in the interpreting during the Second Sino-Japanese War (Li et al., 2016), in which Chinese interpreters' moral orthodoxy of Confucian humanism collide with their political ideology of national responsibility. Similar contradictions and modifications regarding ideological and social positioning are also found in the Korean Conflict (Kim, 2021) as well as in the conflict zones in Lebanon (Moreno, 2021).

While interpreting within conflict zones, the ethics and neutrality of the interpreter are often profoundly challenged (Tesseur & Footitt, 2019). As the

International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) stipulates, “Regardless of who engages you, serve all parties equally without expressing your opinions or sympathies. You cannot be an advocate for any cause and must declare any conflict of interest” (AIIC, 2023a), which underscores interpreters’ responsibility to maintain impartiality and confidentiality, as well as to ensure the accurate rendition of the message (Amich, 2013). This seems to set interpreters as a “conduit” that conveys, rather than an agent that mediates (Parsons, 1978; Reddy, 1979). Yet in practice, interpreting in conflict zones is oftentimes shaped by ideologies that are either manifested or reinforced through the interpreter’s output to strengthen hegemony (Beaton, 2016), echo socio-political positions (Inghilleri, 2010; Takeda, 2008), promote peace-keeping (Baker, 2010; Lewis, 2012; Ingold, 2014), or even work against the country of their own cultural heritage (Takeda, 2009). These findings demonstrate the inevitable ideological clashes and corresponding adjustments in the interpreting of conflict and war.

To date, researchers have extensively explored ideology and interpreting in war and post-war contexts. While most of the studies are situated within “war struck regions” (Voinova, 2024), the interpreting of conflict in the institutional settings has not received enough academic attention. As Munday (2012) added to the investigation of social power with Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), we are provided with a more comprehensive description of linguistic signs in translation (Bazzi, 2019). Hence, building on existing research on interpreter ideology, this study aims to expand the field by examining how interpreters handle conflict discourse in international organizations, with a focus on the complexities of interpreting in politically charged settings.

3. Research Design

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The present study employs van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Theory (1998; 2006; 2008) of Critical Discourse Analysis as the macro-level analytical framework and Martin and White’s Appraisal Theory (2005) at the micro-level to examine interpreter ideology. Appraisal Theory, developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics, focuses on evaluative interpersonal meanings in language through three subsystems: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation (Martin & White, 2005). Among these, Attitude examines expressions of emotion, ethics, and aesthetics; Engagement explores the management of dialogic space, while Graduation addresses the scalability of meaning, central to the entire Appraisal framework.

In this study, Graduation serves as the key dimension for analyzing ideological factors at the discourse level. Graduation is divided into two components: Force and Focus. Force evaluates the degree or intensity of expressions, including Intensification, which grades qualities, processes, and modalities (e.g., “such a fool,” “extremely attractive”), and Quantification, which measures quantity, volume, and time (e.g., “heaps of trouble,” “long-lasting hostility”). Focus, on the other hand, concerns with gradable meanings of non-scalable categories, often sharpening (e.g.,

“pure evil,” “a clean break”) or softening boundaries to adjust the intensity of evaluation (White, 2015). Martin and White (2005) underscore that sharpening reflects maximal authorial investment, whereas softening moderates the tone of evaluation.

While adopting Graduation at the lexical and semantic levels, it is vital to contextualize textual analysis within social frameworks, as Fairclough (2003) argues, “textual analysis needs to be framed in social analysis which can consider bodies of texts in terms of their effects on power relations.” In this light, van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Theory (SCT) of Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 1998; 2006; 2008) is applied at the macro level to explore the underlying reasons for discourse-semantic categories in UNSC interpreting on the Israeli-Palestinian Question. SCT offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing discourse through three interrelated dimensions: discourse structures, cognitive processes, and social contexts. Central to SCT is the context model, a cognitive representation of the communicative situation, which enables discourse to be adapted for specific audiences and purposes (van Dijk, 2008). Socially, SCT situates discourse within its broader contexts, highlighting how discourses both reflect and shape societal structures by varying across social groups and institutions.

In this study, discourse structures are analyzed through Appraisal, while cognitive processes and social contexts are examined to uncover the interplay between interpreter ideology and the socio-political dynamics of the UNSC. This multi-layered approach facilitates a deeper understanding of how interpreting practices shape to the narratives constructed in conflict settings.

3.2. Methodology

The source material is drawn from the publicly available official website of the UN Web TV (<https://webtv.un.org/en>), where recordings of United Nations meetings and events can be accessed on demand. The corpus analyzed in this study consists of four United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meetings held in 2024, specifically addressing “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. This study examines the English-Chinese language pair with English as the spoken language for Israel and the State of Palestine, while UN Chinese interpreters provide simultaneous interpreting for both parties. Details of the corpus are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Information about the Palestinian Question Corpus.

Speaking Party	Size		
	Time Length (ST+TT)	Token (ST)	Token (TT)
Israel	48'07" + 48'12"	5371	12,427
The Stae of Palestine	62'17" + 62'24"	6049	9,286
Total	221'	11,420	21,713

*ST: source text; TT: target text.

Log-likelihood (Dunning, 1993; Rayson et al., 2004) is a statistical measure used to compare the fit of two models or hypotheses, particularly in assessing the statistical significance of frequency differences between two categories. When the log-likelihood (LL) > 3.84 , the difference is considered statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Log-ratio is an “effect-size” statistic put forward by Andrew Hardie (see <https://cass.lancs.ac.uk/log-ratio-an-informal-introduction/>) that represents the size and direction of the disparity between two corpora. When the log-ratio (LR) > 0 , it means that the standardized frequency of the word is higher in the target group than in the reference group; conversely, it is lower in the reference group. This study applies both log-likelihood and log-ratio to calculate the statistical significance of the Appraisal shifts in the interpreting for Israel and Palestine, with the aim of demonstrating dynamic patterns of graduation shifts supported by statistical evidence rarely seen in previous research. Normalized frequency (NF) is also calculated for a better comparison between the two sets of data.

The corpus is first bilingually aligned at the sentence level and annotated using the coding software BFSU Qualitative Coder 1.1. Following this, the frequency, normalized frequency (NF), log-likelihood (LL), and log-ratio (LR) are calculated to determine statistical significance. The results are discussed in terms of the differing patterns of force, focus, and polarity shifts between the interpreting for Israel and the State of Palestine at the discursive level, and are analyzed under the Socio-Cognitive Theory of CDA (van Dijk, 1998; 2006; 2008) for the socio-political background and cognitive factors underlying these discursive strategies in interpreting.

4. Results

Table 2 presents a summary of shifts and non-shifts in the use of Graduation resources between the interpreting for Israel and the State of Palestine. These shifts represent instances where the force, focus or polarity of meaning has changed in the interpreting process. From a proportional perspective, 63.8% of the total instances among the interpreting for Israel involved shifts in Graduation resources, compared to 36% involving non-shifts. Similarly, in the interpreting for Palestine, 57.8% of instances are shifts, while 42.2% are non-shifts. The overall numbers highlight a tendency towards inconsistency in Graduation resources between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) in both groups, as well as a strong inclination towards shifting.

Table 2. Shifts and non-shifts of Graduation resources.

Type	Speaking Party		
	Israel	The State of Palestine	% of total
Shifts	320	214	0.638
Non-shifts	146	156	0.360
Total	466	370	1

The data from the manual annotation and statistical calculation of interpreting shifts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict corpus are presented in **Table 3**. The shifts are categorized into three types according to Graduation: force shifts, focus shifts, and polarity shifts, with each category further divided into subtypes based on the direction and nature of the shift. “Int” and “quan” in the table are abbreviations for “intensification” and “quantification” of Graduation.

Table 3. Graduation shifts in Israeli-Palestinian conflict interpreting.

Type	Subtype	Israel (NF)	The State of Palestine (NF)	Log-likelihood (LL)	Log-ratio (LR)
Force shifts	int-upscale→int-downscale	76 (0.66)	17 (0.17)	31.62*	1.93
	int-upscale→\	11 (0.1)	2 (0.02)	5.5*	2.23
	int-downscale→int-upscale	9 (0.08)	64 (0.65)	55.94*	-3.06
	int-downscale→\	2 (0.02)	4 (0.04)	1.04	-1.23
	\→int-upscale	4 (0.03)	7 (0.07)	1.38	-1.04
	\→int-downscale	4 (0.03)	1 (0.01)	1.48	1.77
	quan-upscale→quan-downscale	9 (0.08)	3 (0.03)	2.26	1.35
Focus shifts	sharpen→soften	31 (0.66)	6 (0.4)	1.4	0.72
	sharpen→\	7 (0.15)	0 (0.0)	0.0	0.0
	soften→sharpen	9 (0.19)	9 (0.6)	5.58*	-1.65
Polarity shifts	strengthen negativity	22 (0.14)	65 (0.64)	45.78*	-2.21
	strengthen positivity	7 (0.04)	13 (0.13)	5.51*	-1.54
	weaken negativity	121 (0.77)	18 (0.18)	46.36*	2.1
	weaken positivity	8 (0.05)	5 (0.05)	0.0	0.03
Total		320	214	3.82	0.25

*NF: normalized frequency.

For force and focus shifts, the following shift subtypes showed substantial significance between the interpreting for Israel and Palestine: 1) from upscaled intensification to downscaled intensification ($LL = 31.62$, $p < 0.001$, $LR = 1.93$), 2) from upscaled intensification to null ($LL = 5.5$, $p < 0.01$, $LR = 2.23$), 3) from downscaled intensification to upscaled intensification ($LL = 48.13$, $p < 0.001$, $LR = -3.06$), and 4) from soften to sharpen ($LL = 5.58$, $p < 0.01$, $LR = 1.65$). In terms of polarity shifts, statistical significance is found in the strengthening of negativity ($LL = 45.78$, $p < 0.001$, $LR = -2.21$), the strengthening of positivity ($LL = 5.51$, $p < 0.05$, $LR = -1.54$), and the weakening of negativity ($LL = 46.36$, $p < 0.001$, $LR = 2.1$). These results revealed an intriguing pattern: when interpreting for Israel, interpreters tend to downplay upscaled and sharpened negative appraisals, thereby weakening negativity. In contrast, the interpreting for Palestine presents a different picture, with interpreters more likely to amplify upscaled negative appraisals

to strengthen negativity.

5. Discussion

5.1. The Cognitive Level of Interpreter Ideology

The AIIC code of conduct mandates that interpreters should maintain accuracy and neutrality (AIIC, 2023b). However, the shifts marked in this study suggest that some subjectivity may infiltrate the interpreting process, reflecting interpreter ideology. Specifically, the present study puts forward two major cognitive level factors that may influence interpreters, which are institutional alignment and national alignment. Institutional alignment often occurs when interpreters operate within an institution or organization, such as the United Nations or the European Parliament. In these settings, interpreters' role as agency or gatekeeper usually echoes the norms and disciplines of that institution (Wang & Feng, 2018). National alignment, on the other hand, emerges when interpreters work for their own country, regardless of the context—whether in war or peace. Yet, the present study suggests that even in situations where interpreters work in non-home nation contexts, they may still be affected by national principles and the stance of home country.

China's Position Paper on Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2023) emphasizes its stance on resolving the conflict through peaceful dialogue and diplomatic means. In this statement, China supports the restoration of Palestine's legitimate national rights, advocating for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. Additionally, it calls on the United Nations Security Council to demand an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, referencing UNSC Resolution 2712. This national-level statement underscores China's alignment with international efforts for peace and its support for Palestinian sovereignty. The position reflects a focus on upholding international law and promoting dialogue as the preferred conflict resolution mechanism. Building on this, China's position paper also highlights its broader diplomatic philosophy of non-intervention and respect for state sovereignty, which is deeply rooted in its foreign policy.

In interpreting contexts, especially in international platforms like the UNSC, interpreters may be influenced by the values and ideologies espoused by their home countries. For Chinese interpreters, this could mean an emphasis on accurately conveying calls for peace and dialogue over escalatory rhetoric, reflecting China's position of promoting peaceful negotiations. This potential alignment of interpreting practices with diplomatic stance may result in shifts in the tone or focus of translations. For instance, intensifications are amplified regarding criticisms for anti-UN behaviors. Force shifts in interpreting could downplay aggressive statements or emphasize peaceful resolutions, mirroring China's advocacy for de-escalation. Similarly, focus shifts might de-emphasize military solutions or confrontational rhetoric in favor of dialogue-focused language, consistent with China's official stance on conflict resolution.

Example 1

ST: Such attacks against the UN, its Secretary General, and its agencies are unacceptable, dangerous, and *should be* decisively rejected.

TT: 这种对于联合国秘书长及其联合国机构的攻击是令人无法接受的, 危险的, 也*必须*遭到果断的拒绝。

In example 1, the State of Palestine condemns Israel's denouncement of the UN and the Secretary General. The interpreter's shift from "should be" to "必须 (must)" reflects a significant intensification of the modality, which strengthens the force of the original statement in the target language. It implies a compulsory or non-negotiable action, leaving no room for flexibility or alternative interpretations. This shift moves the tone from a recommendation to an absolute demand, reflecting an ideological alignment with the Palestinian position and the institutional alignment with UN, where the interpreter seeks to emphasize the seriousness and uncompromising nature of the condemnation of Israel's actions. The use of "must" can also elevate the perceived authority of the speaker, presenting the statement as an absolute moral or legal imperative. This could be intended to bolster the legitimacy of Palestine's stance in the conflict by framing Israel's actions as something that must be condemned by the international community, particularly the UN.

Example 2

ST: *We have a duty to* our people to seek every possible pathway to bring an end to the slaughter.

TT: *我们必须*要找到一切办法结束现在的杀戮。

Example 2 displays a clear shift in positive intensification, where the Palestine speaker's expression of "we have a duty to" becomes "我们必须 (we must)" in the target text (TT). This shift elevates the urgency of the statement, leaving no room for flexibility and transforming the speaker's duty into a compulsory action. By replacing "have a duty" with "must," the interpreter reinforces the speaker's responsibility, making it appear more immediate and non-negotiable. Moreover, this shift also enhances the moral authority of the statement. The word "must" suggests that the speaker holds a position of urgent leadership and moral righteousness, thereby intensifying the sense of responsibility to act without delay. This intensification suggests the interpreter's ideological alignment with the speaker's stance, as Palestine emphasizes the immediate need for action and the necessity of a humanitarian ceasefire in the conflict. By upscaling the intensity, the interpreter also underscores the critical importance of swift intervention, aligning with China's advocacy for resolving the conflict through dialogue and peaceful means, as well as its call for an immediate ceasefire based on UNSC resolutions.

5.2. The Socio-Political Level of Interpreter Ideology

The pattern of shifts in the interpreting of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict is clearly displayed. Nonetheless, to fully explain the seemingly contradictory results between the two groups, it is essential to consider not only the subtypes and

directions of the shifts, but also the objects of evaluation. In the UNSC meetings analyzed in this study, the evaluative targets of the Israeli and Palestinian speakers predominantly fall into four categories: 1) themselves and their own people, 2) the opposing party (Israel for Palestine, and vice versa), 3) the UN and its affiliated organizations, and 4) other countries providing aid to either side of the conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the two warring parties hold opposing views on the above evaluative objects. From Israel's standpoint, the Palestinian Islamist political and military organization Hamas is considered a terrorist organization, and Israel is portrayed as the fighter against terrorism. Israel condemns the UN, its affiliated organizations, and other countries for what it perceives as enabling Hamas by not taking sufficient action to secure the release of hostages, calling for a ceasefire, and targeting innocent civilians. Conversely, from Palestine's perspective, Israel is seen as the oppressor, impeding Palestinian national liberation. Palestinian speakers tend to view the UN and its organizations, along with other countries, as supportive forces in achieving ceasefire and broader humanitarian efforts. These contrasting perspectives shape how each party evaluates the four primary objects of evaluation, and this divergence plays a crucial role in influencing the appraisal shifts observed in the interpreters' renditions.

Example 3

ST: One week ago, Special Rapporteur Albanez *libelously stated* that the victims of October 7th were not *murdered for their identity*, but in response to Israel's *so-called* oppression. This is victim blaming and a *clear justification* of terror.

TT: 特别报告员他说10月7号不是这个进行的**恐吓**, 而是对以色列的**压迫**的反应。这是对恐怖行径的一个**借口**。

Example 3 is taken from Israel's criticism of Hamas attacks. The most notable shift in this example is the downscaling of intensity in the target text regarding the words underlined. In the source text, the word "libelously" intensified the accusation, implying that the Special Rapporteur's statement was not just incorrect but defamatory. However, it is omitted in the target text, which significantly softens the accusatory tone. This omission also removes a negative judgment of the Special Rapporteur's actions, making the statement less aggressive. The phrase "so-called oppression" in the source text casts doubt on the legitimacy of Palestine's claims of oppression, presenting the statement with a tone of skepticism. In the target text, however, the omission of "so-called" and the presentation of "oppression" without qualification neutralizes this skepticism, resulting in a more neutral rendition of Palestine's claims. This shift may reflect the interpreter's effort to downscale conflict-laden language, aligning with the broader goals of international diplomacy, particularly within the context of a UN meeting where neutrality and diplomatic balance are typically emphasized.

5.3. The Discursive Level of Interpreter Ideology

As van Dijk (2016) noted, building on the ideological mental models of the

speaker, polarized ideological discourse is persuasive in guiding recipients of the discourse to form similar ideological patterns. Interpreters may consciously or unconsciously align their interpreting with the ideological models of the speaker, promoting the target text in line with the ideological square that affects how the speaking and opposing party in a conflict situation are presented. In the interpreting of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the cognitive and social factors together create a “positive us” that primarily contains the UN and its organizations as well as the Palestinians fighting for freedom and independence in alignment with the UN. At the same time, a “negative them” is formed, including the atrocities and humanitarian damages caused by Israeli forces, as well as other countries that disagree with a ceasefire.

Example 4

ST: *You all* know that Iran stands behind these Houthi terror attacks... *You* truly want a ceasefire?... *Such behavior is perhaps not surprising* for *an organization* that eulogizes mass murderers.

TT: 大家都知道伊朗是站在胡塞袭击的背后的。……真的要进行停火吗? ……*这无疑*是美化那些大规模的谋杀犯。

Example 4 is extracted from Israel’s condemnation of Iran’s armed attacks and the ceasefire in Gaza. At the discursive level, two notable shifts occur in the interpretation that align with van Dijk’s Ideological Square (van Dijk, 2016). These shifts—one in pronoun usage and the other in focus—both soften the accusatory tone of the original statement, rendering it more neutral and less confrontational. The first shift is the translation of “you all” to “大家(everyone)” in the target text. This change reduces the directness of the accusation by broadening the reference. Instead of targeting the audience specifically, the statement is transformed into a more general observation, thereby diminishing the responsibility placed on the listeners. The second shift involves a change in focus. In the source text, “such behavior” refers broadly to actions by the UNSC that Israel disapproves of, with the phrase “perhaps not surprising” adding a layer of subtlety, implying that the behavior is consistent with past actions without explicitly condemning it. In the target text, however, this is translated as “这无疑(this undoubtedly)”, which makes the condemnation more definitive but narrows the focus to a specific act—glorifying mass murderers—rather than criticizing the organization’s broader behavior. This shift limits the scope of Israel’s critique, making the statement appear less like an attack on the UNSC as a whole and more like a condemnation of a particular action. By softening both the pronoun and the focus, the interpreter reduces the overall intensity of the original statement, aligning it with a diplomatic tone that is appropriate for a UN context. These shifts reflect an effort to de-escalate the conflict by moderating the language and focusing on specific issues rather than broad criticisms.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored lexical and semantic shifts in the interpreting for both

Israeli and Palestinian speakers, revealing notable ideological patterns. Our results indicated a clear dichotomy between the two parties: interpreting for Israel generally involved mitigation strategies, with frequent use of downscaling of force, softening of focus, and weakening of negativity. This reflects a tendency to moderate Israel's actions and reduce the perception of aggression or hostility. Conversely, interpreting for Palestine was characterized by intensification, including upscaling of force, sharpening of focus, and strengthening of negativity, which could serve to emphasize Palestinian victimhood and heighten the perceived severity of Israel's actions. The findings suggest that interpreters, despite their professional commitment to neutrality, are inevitably situated within complex webs of political and ideological forces. Specifically, while interpreting the Israeli-Palestinian Question in the UNSC, interpreters are guided by the UN Charter, their home country's stance, and the discourse patterns of the Ideological Square. These forces inevitably shape the way interpreters process and convey information, subtly influencing the narrative construction of conflicts on the international stage.

In this study, we introduced a novel corpus-based methodology by applying statistical methods such as Log-likelihood and Log-ratio to measure the effect size of shifts in the interpreting of both parties, marking the innovative application of these tools in this field of research. Compared to previous case studies, the paradigm adopted in the present study is more scientifically rigorous, offering new insights for future research. The study also contributes to the field of research by deepening the understanding of interpreter ideology within institutional conflict settings. It addresses the limitations of current studies with a dynamic approach that measures appraisal shifts between the source text and the target text at both macro and micro levels. By employing a robust corpus-based methodology combined with Critical Discourse Analysis and Appraisal Theory, we have uncovered intricate patterns of ideological mediation in interpreting practices.

Overall, the implications of this study extend beyond the specific context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the United Nations Security Council. They highlight the broader role of interpreters as pivotal actors in the global communication landscape, whose work can either exacerbate or mitigate tensions in international relations. This research underscores the need for further exploration into the ethical dimensions of interpreting, particularly in highly charged political environments. It also calls for the development of training programs that equip interpreters with the skills to recognize and manage ideological influences, thereby fostering more balanced and nuanced communication.

Future research should aim to replicate and extend this study's findings across diverse conflict zones and institutional settings. Such efforts will not only enrich our theoretical frameworks but also inform practical strategies for enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of interpreting services in promoting dialogue and understanding among nations. Ultimately, this line of inquiry holds the potential to contribute to more peaceful and just resolutions of international disputes, reflecting the profound impact that language professionals can have on the world stage.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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