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Investigating gender effects on interpreter style

A corpus-based multidimensional study of Chinese-English institutional interpreting

Xiaoshu Yuan
Shanghai International Studies University

Yunzhang Shi
Weifang University of Science and Technology

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Abstract

This research investigates gender-related style differences in diplomatic interpreting using multidimensional corpus analysis. It was found that while female and male interpreters demonstrate convergent styles marked by informational focus and persuasive explicitness, significant divergences emerge in 14 linguistic parameters. Analysis reveals that shared fidelity to source texts creates stylistic uniformity, whereas varying social expectations and pragmatic factors influence gender-specific linguistic choices. The findings challenge assumptions about gendered interpreting styles, highlighting how professional norms mediate biological differences in diplomatic discourse contexts.

Keywords

Corpus, diplomatic discourse, gender effect, interpreter's style, multidimensional analysis (MDA).

INTRODUCTION

Gender is widely understood in contemporary scholarship as a cultural and social construction that shapes individuals' behaviors, identities, and

communicative styles (Baker, 2008; Butler, 1990; Talbot, 2019). This socially constructed dimension is distinct from, though often intertwined with, the biological notion of sex. In this paper, gender is defined as the publicly and institutionally acknowledged male or female identity of interpreters, employing a binary categorization of people based largely on their perceived reproductive capabilities. While this operationalization is necessarily simplified, the analysis remains attentive to the more nuanced and fluid sociolinguistic conceptions of gender and recognizes that translators' linguistic and stylistic choices may be influenced not only by their biological sex but also by broader gendered norms embedded in professional and cultural contexts (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Hu, 2018; Talbot, 2019).

Numerous studies have indicated that gender can influence the use and perception of language across various settings (Crawford, 1995; Coates, 1997; Kessler & McKenna, 1978; Lakoff, 1975; Talbot, 2019). Translation was initially studied as a linguistic phenomenon, primarily concerned with equivalence and the transfer of meaning between languages (Baker, 1992; Catford, 1965; Munday, 2001; Nida, 1964; Pym, 2010). With the broadening of research interests, scholars have begun to explore whether and how gender-based differences in language use may be reflected in translators' stylistic preferences and textual strategies (e.g., Baker, 1995; Defrancq, 2015; von Flotow, 1997), thereby prompting empirical investigations into how gender may correlate with certain translational tendencies. To investigate such stylistic differences empirically, corpus-based approaches offer a useful methodological framework by enabling systematic analysis of language patterns across large datasets.

Corpus-based studies on the translator's style originated from Baker's Towards a Methodology for Investigating the Style of a Literary Translator, published in 2000. Since then, the academic community has used corpus-based methodology to conduct a battery of studies on the translator's style, taking such entry points as vocabulary, syntax, collocation, semantic prosody, discourse and narrative features, and other linguistic features (Cermakova, 2015; Hu & Xie, 2015; Meng, 2008; Winters, 2007) or from the perspective of non-linguistic features covering the strategies and tactics of spoken or written translation (Bartłomiejczyk, 2020; Besien & Meuleman, 2008; Bosseaux, 2006; Pöchhacker, 2007). However, studies in this strand have yielded methodological intractability. Analyzing the translator's style from an individual dimension (e.g., words, collocation, etc.) is comparable to "the blind touch the elephant" (meaning taking part for the whole). This will cause

overgeneralization and might lead to agnosticism if we have not investigated each dimension in-depth.

Moreover, the research scope in this strand needs to be expanded. Previous corpus-based studies on translators' styles have mainly centered on written translation, particularly literary translation. Despite a handful of studies aiming to explore the interpreter's style, few of which are concerned with the effect of gender on the interpreter's style (Gumul, 2021; Gumul & Bartlomiejczyk, 2022; Kajzer-Wietrzny, 2013; Saldanha, 2011; van Besien & Meuleman, 2008).

The present study, an exploratory attempt towards this far less explored territory, aims to globally and locally investigate the impact of an interpreter's gender upon his or her interpreting style in Chinese-English diplomatic interpreting. Using the multidimensional analysis (MDA) framework and the diplomatic discourse interpreting corpus (DDIC) developed by the first author and her research team, differences and similarities between male and female interpreters in terms of dimensional functions and linguistic features will be examined in order to identify gender effects on interpreters' styles.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic research into gendered language use and translation has grown in importance over the last few decades. Modern studies go beyond biological determinism and primarily present gender as a socially and culturally produced construct that shapes communicative practices, stylistic choices, and language behavior (Butler, 1990; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Talbot, 2019).

These gendered impacts vary by context and frequently intersect with institutional norms and individual agency (Grahn, 2023), particularly in professional settings such as translation and interpretation, where stylistic mediation is critical. Against this backdrop, this section investigates two interconnected research strands relevant to the study: gender-based variation in language use across broad communication circumstances, and gendered stylistic tendencies in translation and interpretation. This dual focus places the study at the intersection of sociolinguistics and translation studies, while also showing important empirical gaps that the current research attempts to fill.

1.1. Gender difference in language use

Research on the relationship between gender and language can be traced back to the early 1900s. Jespersen (1922, 1949) observed that women's speech tended to be more conservative than men's, a viewpoint shared by Reik (1954, p. 14), who stated that "we all know that there is a 'man talk' and a 'woman talk'." However, systematic scholarly research in this field did not begin until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s (Weatherall, 2002). Lakoff's (1975) groundbreaking study highlighted the gendered aspects of language, contending that lexical preferences, syntactic usage, and the prevalence of particular forms all mirrored differences between male and female speech. Since then, gender-based diversity in language use has been an increasingly recurring field of scholarly inquiry, with numerous studies suggesting that men and women often differ in what they talk about, how they structure discourse, and the functions they assign to spoken interaction (Bloom & Lahey, 1978; Coates, 2013; Eakins & Eakins, 1976; Gal, 1991; Haas, 1979; Khabitovich & Ulugbek kizi, 2025; Kramer, 1974).

For example, Haas (1979) explores the stereotypes and evidence of male and female spoken language differences by analyzing the literature on the form, topic, content, and usage of language between males and females. She concluded that men use more nonstandard forms and speak more assertively or directively, whereas women express themselves through laughter and emotional language. Nonetheless, her observations and investigation lack empirical backing. Therefore, more empirical research is urgently required.

Over the following decades, this field diversified considerably, moving beyond simple binary assumptions. Later research investigated gendered conversational practices such as the use of minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, and turn-taking behaviors (Brahnam & De Angeli, 2012; Coates, 2013; Khabitovich & Ulugbek kizi, 2025; Nawaz et al., 2024; Usman et al., 2025). Scholars also expanded the focus to institutional contexts such as education (Coates, 2013; Grahn, 2024; Sheng & Li, 2024; Thorne, 1997) and the workplace (Österbacka & Räsänen, 2024; Pauwels, 2003), where gendered speech styles interact with hierarchical and professional dynamics. Coates (2013), in particular, provided a comprehensive historical overview of gender and language studies, identifying ten linguistic features often associated with women's language. However, she also critiqued early sociolinguistic models for over-relying on childhood socialization (e.g., classroom settings), calling for

more nuanced explanations that incorporate social context, power relations, and identity work.

A major methodological advance in the study of gendered language use has been the adoption of corpus linguistics, which enables systematic, large-scale analysis of linguistic patterns. Holmes (1993a, 1993b, 1999) and Holmes and Sigley (2001) were among the early scholars to combine discourse analysis with corpus methods to examine gender differences in pragmatic markers and speech acts. Baker (2014), drawing on both the BNC and self-built corpora, demonstrated how gendered language use varies across genres and communicative contexts, challenging essentialist views. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) and Grahn (2023) emphasize that gendered linguistic practices are shaped by institutional settings, cultural norms, and speaker agency. Meyerhoff (2018) further underscore the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of gendered discourse, offering robust empirical evidence to support this shift in theorization. These recent studies have significantly reshaped the analytical landscape of gender and language research, demonstrating that gendered language use is not a fixed or binary phenomenon, but a socially embedded practice shaped by context, genre, and institutional discourse norms. These insights provide both a theoretical and methodological foundation for the present study. By employing a corpus-based multidimensional analysis, this research investigates stylistic variation in interpreter output through the lens of publicly acknowledged gender identity, while remaining attentive to broader sociolinguistic understandings of gender as fluid and performative. In doing so, the study aims to move beyond essentialist binaries and offer a more nuanced, empirically grounded account of how gender interacts with interpreter style in professional settings.

1.2. Gender difference in translators' and interpreters' style

Translators' style refers to stable linguistic patterns that reflect translators' subjectivity in the translation process (Hu & Xie, 2017), including consistent strategies such as the use of prefaces, glosses, and paratextual elements (Baker, 2000). The rise of corpus-based translation studies has enabled increasingly systematic investigations into stylistic variation. Within this framework, gender —understood here as a socially and institutionally constructed identity (Butler, 1990; Talbot, 2019)— has been recognized as a potential influence on translational behavior (Hu & Meng, 2018). Yet, most gender-focused style studies have centered on literary translation (e.g., Cermakova, 2015; Huang,

2014; Meng, 2008; Winters, 2007), while the interpreting domain remains relatively underexplored.

Interpreting, despite its immediacy and constraints, is no less shaped by individual style. As Hu (1989) argues, interpreters' long-term practice can leave stylistic imprints. However, gender-based stylistic variation in interpreting has received limited attention. Existing research can be broadly categorized into two strands: studies in which gender is treated as an incidental factor in interpreters' roles (e.g., Anderson, 1976; Angelelli, 2003; Bühler, 1985; Cecot, 2001), and a smaller body of corpus-informed studies that explicitly examine gendered stylistic patterns in public interpreting settings (e.g., Hu & Hu, 2015; Hu & Meng, 2018; Jiang & Hu, 2020; Pan & Li, 2019).

The first strand holds that interpreters' role incidentally includes gender differences (e.g., Anderson, 1976; Angelelli, 2003; Bühler, 1985; Cecot, 2001). Anderson (1976) mentions a number of social characteristics, including sex, that influence interpreter-mediated interaction but makes no clear distinction between sex and gender. Bühler (1985), who focuses on nonverbal cues in conference interpreting, incorporates sex as a dimension in interpreter personality profile. Cecot (2001) studies pause in simultaneous interpretation, concluding that women interpreters use more filled but shorter pauses while men use more unfilled but longer pauses. However, it is too early to claim that this result is representative of the eleven interpreters involved. In a preliminary survey study, Angelelli (2003) found statistically significant disparities in role perceptions among male and female interpreters. However, her later in-depth study (Angelelli, 2004) reveals no considerable evidence that gender effects interpreters' role perceptions across settings. As a result, while these studies address sex or gender, they do not provide a thorough examination of gender as a socially created category or thoroughly conceptualize its impact on interpreting performance or style.

The second strand of study consists of a few exploratory investigations that aim to connect interpreters' stylistic choices to gender. The scarcity of such research is due in part to the ephemeral and spontaneous character of interpreting, which makes it more difficult to capture stylistic traits consistently. Furthermore, analyzing data is frequently unavailable due to confidentiality problems, particularly outside publicly provided public contexts. Consequently, the majority of current research relies on publicly available interpretive resources, such those published by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Previous studies have investigated gender-based variation in interpreting styles from lexical and pragmatic perspectives. Hu and Hu (2015), focusing on hedges in Chinese-English consecutive interpreting in diplomatic settings, found that male interpreters used fewer hedging expressions such as "perhaps," "I believe," and "a little bit" than female interpreters. They attribute these differences to a combination of social context, interpreting conventions, and individual interpreter style, although their limited data makes it difficult to determine causality. Pan and Li (2019) examined the use of epistemic markers such as "I think" and "I believe" in Chinese government press conferences and discovered that male interpreters favored "I think," while female interpreters preferred "I believe." They further noted that male interpreters' output showed greater tentativeness, though their study offers only a partial account and lacks conclusive explanatory power.

Hu and Meng (2018) conducted a more systematic investigation into lexical and modal preferences among male and female interpreters at press conferences. Their results suggest that male interpreters are more inclined to use low-value modal verbs, adopt strengthening strategies, and frequently employ the first-person plural pronoun "we." In contrast, female interpreters tend to favor high-value modal verbs and select English equivalents for Chinese modal adverbs, intensifiers, verbs of cognitive attitude, and the same pronoun "we." Their study offers pioneering insights into the influence of gender on interpreting practices, advocating for more gender-conscious approaches in interpreting studies.

Complementing these perspectives, Magnifico and Defrancq (2019) analyzed self-repair behavior among male and female interpreters using a corpus-based approach. They found that, in the English booth, female interpreters used significantly more editing terms —often accompanied by apologies— than males, while no significant differences were observed in the French/Dutch subcorpus. These findings indicate subtle gendered strategies in managing disfluency and maintaining politeness in high-pressure interpreting environments.

While these studies shed light on specific gendered tendencies in interpreter discourse, many focus on isolated linguistic features or rely on limited datasets. Few studies have systematically investigated gendered variation using a multidimensional approach. Against this backdrop, the present study addresses this gap by using a Chinese-English diplomatic interpreting corpus and the advanced Multidimensional Analysis Tagger 1.3

(MAT) to rigorously investigate gender-related stylistic variances among professional interpreters. Furthermore, the reasons why diplomatic interpreters shape their interpreting style are to be explored.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study explores the impact of gender on interpreters' styles and addresses the following two questions:

(1) In which dimensions does the interpreted output of female interpreters differ from or resemble that of male interpreters? If differences are observed, which specific linguistic features account for these differences?

(2) What sociocultural or institutional factors might account for the stylistic similarities or differences observed between male and female interpreters?

2.1. Diplomatic discourse interpreting corpus

The data was drawn from Diplomatic Discourse Interpreting Corpus (abbreviated as DDIC) developed by the first authors and her research team. Although bilingual transcripts of the Chinese Premier's and Foreign Minister's press conferences are accessible online, these are typically either officially edited translations released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or unofficial renditions uploaded by third parties. Such versions, having undergone revision and post-editing, do not faithfully reflect the spontaneous and impromptu nature of interpreting as performed on site. We therefore adopted *iFlytek Heard* (*讯飞听见*[1]) for transcribing the materials and proofread them by listening to on-site video repeatedly. The final transcription further underwent member checking to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the follow-up research results. The final DDIC consists of the transcription of real-time recordings of eight press conferences by males and nine by females from 2003 to 2019. Press conferences are political and diplomatic occasions where our senior leaders answer questions raised by journalists from both at home and abroad. The content of the materials covers topics including economy, politics, and foreign affairs.

[1] iFlytek Heard (讯飞听见) is a software for transcription developed by iFlytek.

Table 1 provides a detailed description of the corpus, including the number of press conferences, the number of interpreters, and the size of the sub-corpus. The male interpreters included Zhang Jianmin, Fei Shengchao, and Sun Ning, while the female interpreters involved were Zhang Lu, Yao Mengyao, Zhang Jing, and Dai Qingli. The male and female interpreters were both staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, which provides systematic English language and translation training. Hence, their high proficiency and wealth of experience in interpreting ensure as much comparability as possible between the texts produced by male and female interpreters.

	Male interpreters	**Female interpreters**
Numbers of diplomatic conference interpreting	8	9
Tokens of source text	53927	65828
Types of source text	1136	1239
Tokens of targeted text	50792	54991
Types of targeted text	4528	4405
Numbers of interpreters	3	4
Interpreters	Zhang Jianmin Fei Shengchao Sun Ning	Dai Qingli Zhang Lu Yao Mengyao Zhang Jing

Table 1. Diplomatic discourse interpreting corpus size

2.2. Multidimensional analysis

Developed initially to investigate the linguistic patterns of variation among spoken and written registers (e.g., Biber, 1988, 1989, 1995), the

multidimensional (MD) analytical approach can be used to analyze the text, genre, register, style, and text type. In Biber's (1988) paper, 67 linguistic features were first annotated automatically. Then, the co-occurrence patterns among those linguistic features were analyzed using factor analysis, identifying the underlying parameters of variation: the factors or dimensions. Finally, six critical dimensions were extracted and interpreted based on the weights of linguistic features in the dimension (Table 2).

Dimensions	**Scores (linguistic features)**
1. Involved vs. Informational Production	This dimension contrasts interactional (involved) language with factual, informational language. Positive factors indicate more interactional features (e.g., private verbs, possible modals, pronouns), whereas negative factors are more informational (e.g., nouns, adjectives, word length).
2. Narrative vs. Non-narrative Concerns	Positive scores indicate a strong narrative orientation (e.g., past tense verbs, third-person pronouns, perfect aspect verbs), whereas negative scores reflect features typical of expository prose (e.g., present tense verbs, attributive adjectives, past participial WHIZ deletions).
3.Elaborated vs. Situation-dependent Reference	Positive scores signal explicit referential style (e.g., WH relative clauses, subject positions, phrasal coordination, nominalizations), while negative scores indicate a reliance on situational or contextual cues (e.g., time adverbials, place adverbials, and adverbs).
4. Overt Expression of Argumentation	Positive scores reflect overt expression of the speaker's stance (e.g., Infinitives prediction modals, suasive verbs, conditional subordination, necessity modals).
5. Abstract vs. Non-abstract Style	Abstract vs. Non-abstract Style Positive scores indicate a highly abstract, formal, and professional style (e.g., Conjuncts, agentless passives, past participial Clauses, BY-passives).
6. On-line Informational Elaboration Marking Stance	Positive scores reflect a high degree of real-time textual elaboration (e.g., THAT clauses as verb complements, demonstratives, THAT relative clauses on object positions, THAT clauses as adj. Complements, existential THERE).

Table 2. Overview of Biber's six dimensions (Biber, 1988)

Biber (2014) illustrates that each dimension can have positive and negative features, identifying two groupings of features that occur in a complementary pattern as part of the same dimension instead of reflecting importance. In other words, when the positive features occur together frequently in a text, the negative features are markedly less frequent in that text, and vice versa. Dimension scores result from summing the individual scores of the features that co-occur on a dimension (Biber, 1988). For instance, Dimension 1 contrasts involved, interactional discourse with informationally dense language. Features with high positive loadings on Dimension 1 —such as first and second-person pronouns, WH-questions, and emphatics— are typical of face-to-face conversation and spontaneous speech. Conversely, high negative loadings —such as nouns, prepositional phrases, longer words, and higher type/token ratios— are characteristic of informationally dense and formal texts. Therefore, a text with a large positive score on Dimension 1 is more oral and interactive, whereas a large negative score indicates a more informational and literate style.

To get a holistic picture of interpreted texts given by male and female interpreters, a multidimensional analysis is to be adopted in the paper that compares dimensional functions and genres. Furthermore, this paper employed SPSS 26 to carry out an independent sample of the T-test among 67 language features to identify differences between male and female interpreters. By so doing, both overall and individual aspects are investigated to describe the effect of gender on diplomatic interpreters' style.

2.3. Multidimensional analysis tagger 1.3

This study used Nini's (2015) Multidimensional Analysis Tagger 1.3 (hereinafter referred to as MAT), which replicates Biber's (1988) analysis of LOB and Brown corpora, and its reliability and validity of results have been widely verified (Nini, 2015). In addition to producing a grammatically annotated version of the corpus for statistical computations, the program offers visualizations that show the corpus location on Biber's (1988) dimensions and identify the text type that is closest to it. But MAT requires the Windows operating system and Java environment. The statistics of dimensions and linguistic features produced by the tagger were imported into Excel 2013 and SPSS 26 for further analysis.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section undertakes a systematic examination of gender-based stylistic variation among interpreters, employing MAT 1.3 for multidimensional text analysis and SPSS 26 for statistical processing. The analysis aims to elucidate both shared patterns and distinctive linguistic features across male and female interpreting performances.

3.1. Interpreters' style between male and female at the dimensional-textual level

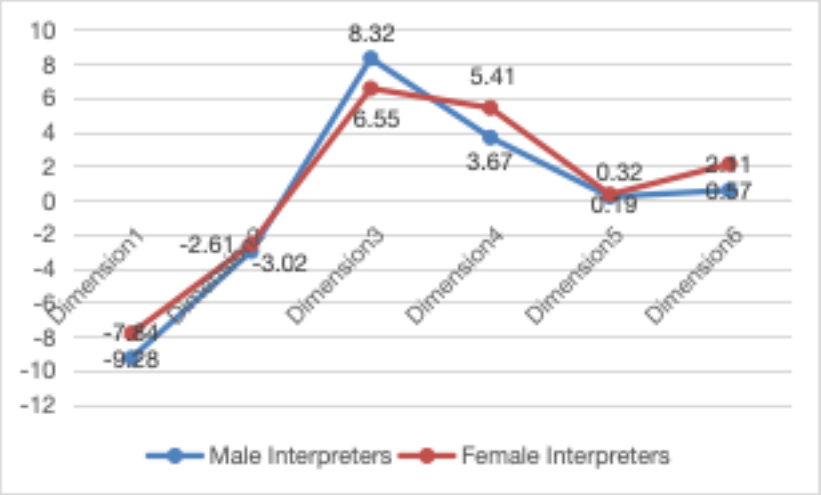

Figure 1. Dimension scores of interpreted texts

To address the first research question, independent samples t-tests were conducted using SPSS 26 to compare male and female interpreter' dimension scores. The results indicate no statistically significant differences across Biber's six dimensions ($p>0.05$), suggesting a high degree of stylistic convergence between the two groups. This consistency reflects the formal and institutional nature of diplomatic interpreting.

Specifically, interpreted texts in Dimension 1 exhibit a marked informational function, as the press conference serves as a platform for disseminating national policies and diplomatic stances to an international

audience. In Dimensions 2 and 3, the texts are characterized by a non-narrative and context-independent style, aligning with the formal, impersonal tenor of high-level diplomatic discourse. Dimension 4 reveals overt persuasive features, attributable to numerous dialogues in the press conference where the speaker answers questions asked by journalists. In Dimension 5, the interpreted output tends to favor abstract informational density, while Dimension 6 shows a tendency for online information elaboration, caused by the distinctive feature of interpreting, i.e., immediacy.

The similarity of six dimensions of male and female interpreters' interpreted texts may be explained by the stringent selection criteria and rigorous training practices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' interpreting team. Diplomatic interpreters represent the voice of the nation and are entrusted with conveying China's official position on the international stage. Only through strict screening, intensive training, and meticulous preparation can one become a truly qualified diplomatic interpreter. Therefore, it is widely acknowledged that diplomatic interpreters must demonstrate exceptional professional competence. The following section analyzes their interpreting styles in detail, focusing on linguistic features across each dimension and identifying the most closely related register types.

The following section will discuss linguistic features and the closest genre in each dimension to describe diplomatic interpreters' styles at length.

3.1.1. Dimension 1

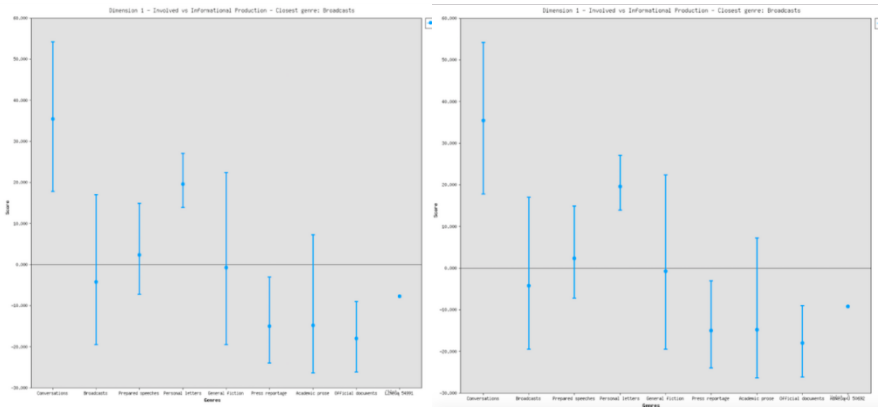

Figure 2. The closest genre in Dimension 1 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Dimension 1 distinguishes Involved and Informational Production. Positive factors/variables represent that the test is more interactional, while negative factors are more informational. As shown in Figure 1, both male and female interpreters exhibit negative scores on this dimension, reflecting the co-occurrence of linguistic features such as nouns, prepositions, passive constructions, and longer words —markers of an informational style. Despite the constraints of real-time processing, diplomatic interpreting in this context demonstrates a clear informational orientation.

This tendency can be attributed to two primary factors. First, within the diplomatic setting of the press conference, the Premier and spokesperson intended to publicize China's strategies, clearing up foreigners' misunderstanding and dispelling some countries' hostility against China. Hence, they were inclined to give more information and explanations, causing diplomatic interpreters to deliver as much information as possible to ensure information enrichment. Second, interpreters used linguistic features belonging to negative factors like nouns, prepositions, lengthier words, and passive sentences to improve the formality of diplomatic discourse interpreting, helping China shape its image as a big, powerful, and considerate country.

However, the readability test suggests subtle gender-based differences. Female interpreters tend to produce interpretations that are somewhat more challenging in terms of both syntactic and lexical complexity, with a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of 12.1, compared to 11.3 for male interpreters. This suggests the use of longer sentences and more polysyllabic words in female output. Additionally, Figure 2 shows that the register most closely aligned with both male and female interpretations in Dimension 1 is broadcast news (e.g., ABC, BBC, VOA). Broadcast language is typically informative, formal, and linguistically dense. The proximity of interpreted output to Broadcast genre underscores the high level of professional competence among diplomatic interpreters and their ability to approximate native-speaker norms in formal, institutional contexts.

3.1.2. Dimension 2

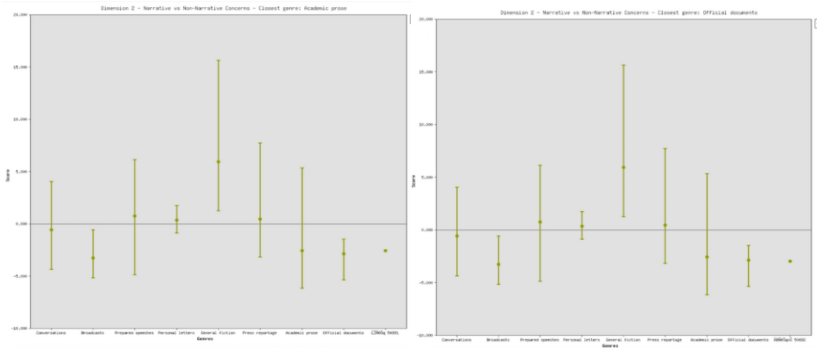

Figure 3. The closest genre in dimension 2 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Dimension 2 is interpreted as 'Narrative versus Non-narrative Concerns.' The positive features (i.e., past tense verbs, third person pronouns, perfect aspect verbs, communication verbs, and present participial clauses) are associated with past-time narration. In contrast, the negative features (i.e., present tense verbs and attributive adjectives) have non-narrative communicative functions. Figure 1 shows that both males' and females' interpreted texts receive negative scores on Dimension 2, meaning that negative linguistic factors are more frequently used by diplomatic interpreters, such as present tense and attributive adjectives, for delivering more non-narrative interpretation, which can be attributed to two factors. On the one hand, narrative patterns in institutional discourse may be seen as obscure or unreliable, hurting the speaker's persuasive function and detracting from efforts to build a favorable national image of China. In diplomatic settings when the primary goal is to portray clarity, authority, and coherence, a non-narrative style is typically preferable.

On the other hand, the Premier's Press Conference, Foreign Minister's Press Conference, and CPPCC Press conference are occasions where the Chinese premier and Foreign Minister answer questions raised by journalists and are mainly concerned with current issues related to China. Consequently, it should behoove both male and female interpreters to use present tense, a negative linguistic factor in dimension 2, to keep faithfulness to the source language. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, gender-based variation emerges in the register proximity of interpreted output. While female interpreters' output bears greater resemblance to academic prose, male interpreters' texts align

most closely with the genre of official documents. This suggests that while maintaining faithfulness is a fundamental value for all diplomatic translators, female interpreters are more likely to use scholarly and coherent language, whereas male interpreters are more in keeping with the linguistic conventions of official addresses.

3.1.3. Dimension 3

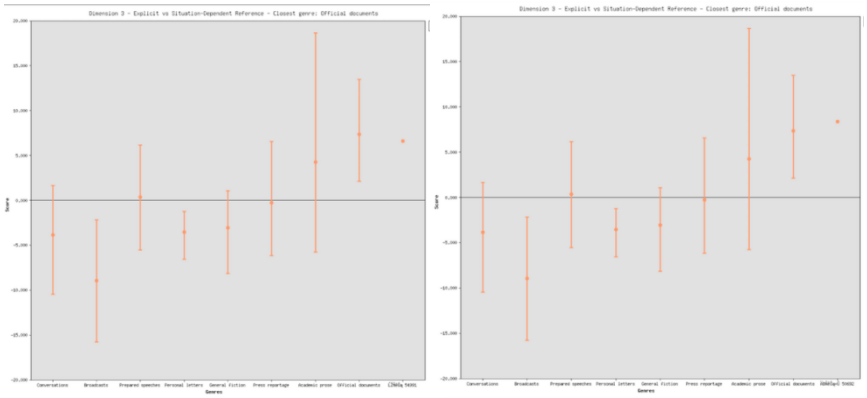

Figure 4. The closest genre in dimension 3 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Dimension 3 is concerned with Elaborated versus Situation-dependent Reference. The positive features include time adverbials, place adverbials, and other adverbs, whereas negative features cover WH-relative clauses, phrasal coordination, and nominalizations. Figure 1 shows that female and male interpreters receive high positive scores, meaning their interpreting is more context-independent, which may derive from two reasons. First, in Chinese-English interpreting, nominalization is manifested as stereotyping the action process, omitting the actor, and obscuring the acting motivation, thus shifting the focus of the listeners from the actor and making the discourse fairer and more objective. Nominalization contributes to a more formal and abstract tone, which can project an image of objectivity and professionalism. Such features are commonly found in institutional and diplomatic discourse, where neutrality and authority are valued.

Meanwhile, nominalization enables the interpreter to contain more information in each sentence, enhance the cohesion and coherence of the

discourse, and make the speaker's content sound more authoritative. The second reason lies in power distance. As powers leaders, there is a longer power distance between the Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister and the journalists, so their language is relatively formal and context-independent. Furthermore, Figure 4 reveals that the genre of male and female interpreters' rendition is an official document characterized by high formality and seriousness.

3.1.4. Dimension 4

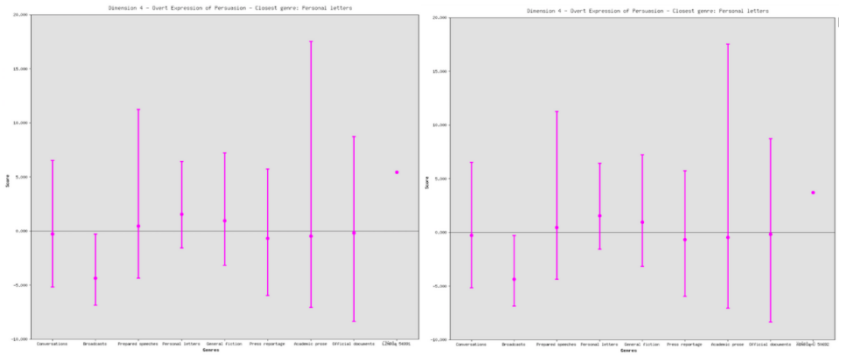

Figure 5. The closest genre in dimension 4 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Dimension 4 examines the overt expression of argumentation, which only has positive features, including prediction modals, necessity modals, possibility modals, suasive verbs, conditional subordination, and split auxiliaries. Figure 1 shows that the interpreted text is more explicit than the original text, echoing previous studies examining exploitation as one of the translation universals (e.g., Hu, 2009; Shlesinger, 1989). Moreover, diplomatic interpreters prefer hedging like "perhaps, I believe" and modal verbs (e.g., "maybe," "must," "can," "should"), which result in greater explicitness in the target language. As illustrated in Figure 5, both female and male interpreters tend to produce interpretations that exhibit logical organization, precise wording, and a certain degree of expressive flexibility. Interestingly, their language features are partially aligned with those commonly found in the genre of personal letters. This is easy to understand when the immediacy of interpreting is considered. Information processing in interpretation is characterized by immediacy and

one-time representation of both the source language and target language (Wang, 2019), which requires interpreters to spend efforts in listening and analyzing the source language, short-term memory, production of the target language, and coordination (Gile, 1995). Dealing with such multitasking, interpreters sometimes resort to diverse strategies flexibly to reduce cognitive load and save time, leading to a certain degree of freedom. For example, interpreters will add meaningless 'that,' 'and,' and other connectives as a time buffer to cope with time constraints.

3.1.5. Dimension 5

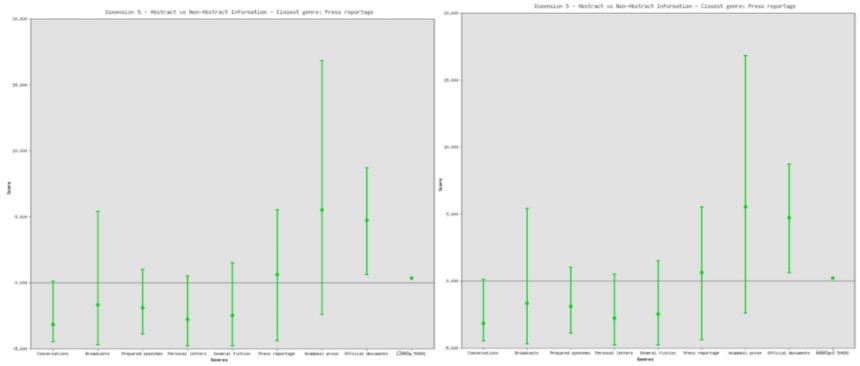

Figure 6. The closest genre in dimension 5 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Similar to Dimension 4, only positive linguistic features could be found in Dimension 5 covering conjuncts, agentless passives, by-passives, past participial adverbial clauses, past participial postnominal clauses, and other adverbial subordinators. It should be noted that male and female interpreters receive high positive scores, representing that their interpreted texts are more technical, abstract, and formal, which is attributed to two reasons. First, they tend to use passive sentences, and the readability test shows that female and male interpretations of passive sentences take up 11.4% and 10.6% of all sentences. Resorting to passive voice means that the interpreters tend to omit or understate the actor and thus ensure greater formality. Second, they employ a myriad of connectives to strengthen the logic among sentences, which is conducive to listeners' understanding, *ad hoc* the foreign listeners. In addition, Figure 6 shows that the genres of both female and male interpreters' renditions

are press reportage, consistent with the materials adopted for constructing the DDIC.

3.1.6. Dimension 6

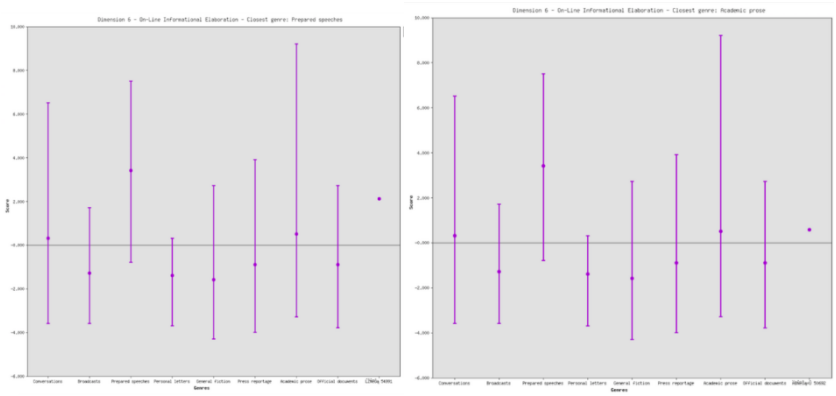

Figure 7. The closest genre in dimension 6 between female (left) versus male (right) interpreters

Dimension 6 explores textual online informational elaboration. Nini (2015) and Crosthwaite (2016) hold that a higher score in dimension 6 suggests that the text is more informational but produced under specific time constraints, like employing post-modifications of noun phrases, attributive clauses, and demonstrative pronouns. It is demonstrated by Figure 1 that both female and male interpreters receive high positive scores, suggesting that they are inclined to use WH-clauses, Stranded prepositions (e.g., "of"), demonstratives, and demonstrative pronouns. Nevertheless, Figure 7 reveals a difference regarding the closest genre in dimension 6, where female interpreters seem to address a prepared speech while male interpreters seem to read academic prose. In other words, female interpreters deliver more formal, abstract, and somewhat more complicated interpretations, which might suggest that female interpreters outperform male interpreters to some extent.

3.2. Linguistic features distinguishing male interpreters from female interpreters

As discussed above, although male and female interpreters from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs show differences in the closest genre of their interpreted text in dimensions 2 and 6, their interpreted text shares a similar pattern that boasts informational production, non-narrative concerns, elaborated reference, overt expression of persuasion, abstract information and online information elaboration. Therefore, to make an in-depth investigation of gender differences in interpreter style, we adopted an independent sample t-test to compare 67 linguistic factors involved in six dimensions, only to find out that 31 factors (46.3%) contribute to the differences in interpreting style between male and female interpreters. Due to space limitation, we solely focus on the first 14 factors (see Table 3), significantly distinguishing male from female interpreters with specific examples.

No.	**Factors**	**Female**	**Male**	**p**	**Absolute difference**
1	Second person pronouns (SPP2)	-0.20	-0.05	0.000	0.15
2	Pronoun it (PIT)	-0.15	-0.44	0.000	0.29
3	Existential there (EX)	0.78	-0.17	0.000	0.95
4	That verb complements (THVC)*	0.97	0.28	0.000	0.69
5	Present participial WHIZ deletion relatives (WZPRES)*	0.44	0.50	0.000	0.06
6	Sentence relatives (SERE)*	0.50	1.75	0.000	1.25
7	Causative adverbial subordinators (CAUS)	0.06	-0.35	0.000	0.41
8	Conditional adverbial subordinators (COND)	-0.50	-0.82	0.000	0.32
9	Other adverbial subordinators (OSUB)	0.00	0.82	0.000	0.82
10	Word length (AWL)	0.83	0.77	0.000	0.06
11	Conjuncts (CONJ)	1.06	0.13	0.000	0.93
12	Demonstratives (DEMO)	1.14	0.29	0.000	0.85

13	Contractions (CONT)	-0.68	-0.71	0.000	0.03
14	Phrasal coordination (PHC)	3.11	5.19	0.000	2.08

Table 3. Linguistic features distinguishing male from female interpreters

From Table 3, first, it is found that female interpreters are more inclined to use second person pronoun (SPP2) "you" and "your" even if their corresponding Chinese "*您/你* (polite form of you/ informal your)" or "*您的/你的* (polite form of your/ informal your)" may not be found for hearers' sake. Second, female interpreters are more likely to use the "there be" structure, the most distinctive type of existential process under the transitivity system, to realize language's ideational function according to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1985). Existential processes represent that something exists or happens by the mode of press conferences, showing female interpreters' fidelity to the source language. Third, female interpreters are more likely to employ causative adverbial subordinators to explicate the logic between sentences, widely known and studied as textual explication (e.g., Shlesinger, 1995). Finally, female interpreters generally resort to demonstrative "that" as a time filler to relieve time constraints. In addition, female interpreters prefer longer words, making the text more challenging to understand, as verified by the readability test.

Three examples are given below to demonstrate the context in which female interpreters prefer to use these linguistic features.

(1) ST: 今天 我们 非常 荣幸地 邀请 李克强 总理 同 大家 见面，并 回答 大家的 提问。

ST Raw Translation: Today we are very honored to invite Premier Li Keqiang to meet with everyone and answer everyone's questions.

TT: Today we have the privilege to invite Primer Li Keqiang to meet **you** and answer **your** questions.

(2) ST: 这位 记者 朋友 喜欢 单刀直入，那 我 也 开诚布公。

ST Raw Translation: This journalist friend likes to enter with a single sword, then I will also open my heart and speak.

TT: **You went straight to the point in your question** and I will not beat about the bush.

(3) ST: 我 看 还 没有 其他 办法 比 这种 办法 给 企业 带来的 感受 更 公平 和 有效。

ST Raw Translation: I think there is still no other method that brings companies a sense of fairness and effectiveness more than this method.

TT: We believe **that no other way may work as fairly and efficiently as this one for companies.**

Examples 1 and 2 are retrieved from texts produced by female interpreters where the second pronoun "you" and "your" in the interpreted text cannot find their corresponding Chinese. In example 1, we could find somewhat corresponding Chinese "*大家*' (everyone)" and "*大家的*' (everyone's)". Since press conferences are conducted in the form of dialogues and the interpreter speaks on behalf of the speaker rather than a narrator, female interpreters assume the responsibility to ensure direct and smooth communication between the speaker and listeners based on keeping faithfulness to the source language. Similarly, the use of "you" to replace "这 (this)" in example 2 could be explained. Nevertheless, it seems that the second person pronoun "your" used by female interpreters is deviating from the original, violating the rule of ensuring faithfulness of the source language. However, listeners would be confused had the female interpreter rendered "*单刀直入*" into "enter with a single sword." For successful communication between the speaker and the listeners, she explicates the real meaning implied by this metaphoric expression of the source language. She renders it into "went straight to the point in your question." Such addition of a person pronoun occurs if and only if communicative effects are far more significant. Example 3 is taken from texts produced by female interpreters where the connective "that" makes no sense but is used as a time filler to win them more time and ensure the fluency of delivery.

In comparison, male interpreters first resort to the pronoun "it" (formal subject) to deliver balanced sentences or take it as a time buffer to gain more time and relieve working pressure for the fluency of delivery. Second, the following pattern is much more evident: a noun or quantifier pronoun followed by a past participial form of a verb followed by a preposition, e.g., the solution produced by this process. Third, male interpreters prefer to use which-type attributives helpfully, known as "syntactic linearity." According to the Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), a sentence contains a point of departure known as a Theme and a goal of discourse known as Rheme. The former refers to the information the listeners already know, while the latter refers to new information (Hu, 2017). Chinese is such a language that new or essential information is followed by known or less critical information, which is called the Theme-Rhyme movement, another reason causing male interpreters to utilize attributive clauses in order to supplement the later-coming information delivered by the speaker. Finally, male interpreters use other adverbial clause conjunctions, such as since, while, such that, and so that, etc., to explicate the logical relationship between sentences.

In order to demonstrate the context where male interpreters prefer to use these linguistic features, the other three examples are given below.

(4) ST: 战火 烧毁 了 我的 全家，包括 爷爷 亲手 办的 那所 小学。

ST Raw Translation: The flames of war burned down my whole family, including the primary school my grandfather personally ran.

TT: Our home was literally burnt down by the flame of war and so was the primary school, **which my grandfather built with his own hands.**

(5) ST: 目前 中日 关系 的 发展 确实 遇到 很多 困难， 这是 我们 不愿意 看到的。

ST Raw Translation: At present, the development of China-Japan relations has indeed encountered many difficulties. This is something we do not wish to see.

TT: Indeed, the China-Japan relationship has run into many difficulties, **which we do not hope to see.**

(6) ST: “十一五” 规划 的 实施 和 内地 与 香港 建立 更 紧密的 经贸 关系，将会 使 两地 共同 繁荣 与 发展。

ST Raw Translation: The implementation of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and the establishment of closer economic and trade relations between the Mainland and Hong Kong will enable the two places to jointly prosper and develop.

TT: We will be able to **bring even closer the economic ties** between the mainland and Hong Kong so that both Hong Kong and mainland can achieve development and prosperity in parallel.

Examples 4 and 5 are taken from the texts by male interpreters who use “Which-type” attributives as a means of “syntactic linearity” for keeping information completeness of the source language and easing their efforts. Example 6 is also retrieved from the texts by a male interpreter, who enhances the logical structure of the sentence to facilitate the audience’s understanding of the objectives and expectations associated with the implementation of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. In doing so, the interpreter actively intervenes in the source text to improve its accessibility for the target audience, thereby demonstrating a heightened orientation toward the communicative needs of listeners.

Another interesting finding is that the 15th distinctive factor is the type/token ratio (TTR). Male interpreters’ TTR is more significant than female interpreters, showing that male interpreters use more varied vocabularies. This finding echoes Jiang and Hu’s (2020) conclusion about the comparative richness of Fei Shengchao’s translation over Zhang Lu’s, while also expanding it to include gender-related differences among interpreters.

3.3. Motivation of interpreters’ style

There are notable similarities between the texts produced by female and male interpreters regarding dimensional functions, whereas differences can be found in 31 linguistic factors. Female interpreters tend to use lengthier words, second person pronouns (“you,” “your”), “there be” structure, causative adverbial subordinators (e.g., “so,” etc.), and connectives (e.g., “that,” etc.). In contrast, male interpreters are more inclined to use the pronoun “it,” which-type

attributives, and other adverbial clause conjunctions (e.g., "since," "while," "such that," "so that," etc.).

Although the current study involves a limited number of interpreters, corpus-based research does not merely aim to describe linguistic features but also to explore potential sociolinguistic and contextual motivations underlying those patterns. This section, therefore, does not intend to provide definitive answers to the second research question but rather to offer a preliminary interpretation of the observed gendered differences, encouraging further inquiry.

A number of factors may contribute to both the similarities and differences identified, including the time and venue of the press conferences, the source language, and the interpreters' individual backgrounds, such as years of experience and language proficiency. In this study, however, all interpreters are affiliated with China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have undergone similarly rigorous training and selection, which helps minimize variation across these variables. Nevertheless, personal differences —such as communicative style or individual preferences— may still play a role and should be acknowledged as potential influences on the data.

The overall stylistic similarities can largely be attributed to the institutional expectations of diplomatic interpreting. First, faithfulness is usually required as press conferences are considered a remarkable political document in China. Staying faithfulness to the source language shapes a similar interpreting style between male and female interpreters. Moreover, as a highly formal diplomatic occasion, Chinese press conferences play a significant role in the government's external publicity covering China's national policy, foreign affairs, economics, and other issues and in the construction of national image. In this respect, both the Premier of National States and Minister of Foreign Affairs speak on behalf of the country, and their high social position is likely to produce a tendency towards faithfulness to what they hear on the part of both female and male interpreters. Third, a diplomatic interpreter represents the entire country and must convey the voice of the Chinese government rigorously and vividly. Having passed the high threshold for their selection and trained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are inclined to take a neutral stand and try to maintain the formality of press conferences by using nominalization and passive sentences; therefore, both female and male interpreter' interpretation is highly informational in terms of dimension 1. Moreover, diplomatic press conferences involve real-time speech, which makes diplomatic interpreting

particularly demanding. As a result, interpreters are more likely to resort to time fillers such as "and" and "that" to buffer time pressure, during which they can consult their notes, engage short-term memory, and formulate accurate renditions of the original content. This reason may be more appropriately compared with Gile's (1995) tactics for coping with difficulties in the course of interpretation.

However, "translation is not done in a vacuum" (Bassnet & Lefever, 2001, p. 14). It is rather intercultural communication influenced by ideology and identity, including the interpreter's gender role (Hu & Meng, 2018). Interpreting is a form of translation in which the first and final rendition of an utterance in a second language is produced based on the one-time representation of an utterance in a source language (Pöchhacker, 2016) and its immediacy requires the interpreters to take some tactics for dealing with problems encountered. In their choice of linguistic factors, female interpreters differ from males, as discussed above, which may derive from different social positions on the part of men and women in China. Building on foundational work by Leech (1983), Holmes (1993), and Brown and Levinson (1987), later scholars (Carli, 2002; Johnson, 1976; Krumhuber et al., 2023; Lips, 1991; Lorber, 1998; Paez & Ti, 2021) have further examined that the differential distribution of power or different social positions of men and women leads to gender-based differences. In China, women were traditionally thought to be inferior to and less powerful than men, while men were supposed to be leaders or controllers. Although modern China advocates gender equality, bias and prejudice still exist to some extent since males seem to be more powerful, subjective, and forgivable in our society. Hence, though faithfulness is a rule of thumb obeyed by interpreters, male interpreters are more likely to intervene in the source texts. Inspired by Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986), it is noted that interpreting is a communicative process in which the interpreter obtains the speaker's intention and then conveys it to the target listeners by considering their cognitive context. Compared with female interpreters, male interpreters are inclined to consider target language accessibility and try to leave hearers feeling represented by clarifying or explicating the source language or reinforcing his or the speaker's viewpoint. However, female interpreters stress faithfulness to the source text, as in the case of using "second-person pronouns" and "there be" structures to maintain consistency with the original. In other words, female interpreters' behavior is characterized by higher faithfulness to the source language, whereas male interpreter's

behavior features a dynamic balance between faithfulness and practicality (i.e., target language accessibility out of communication purpose).

CONCLUSIONS

Multidimensional analysis can effectively distinguish the register variation of the text and show the linguistic factors influencing the genre difference of the text at length. Combined with quantitative and qualitative analysis, it can describe the interpreters' style more systematically and comprehensively. Based on MAT, this study shows that diplomatic interpreters shape gender-free interpreting styles regarding dimensional functions, that is, to deliver interpretation featuring informational production, non-narrative concerns, elaborated reference, overt expression of persuasion, abstract information, and online informational elaboration.

However, the male and female interpreters in the sample display differences in 31 linguistic features, of which 14 represent statistically significant differences. Within this sample, female interpreters are more inclined to use "lengthier words," "second person pronouns (you, your)," "there be" structures, "causative adverbial subordinators (e.g., "so")," and the connective "that." In contrast, male interpreters tend to use the pronoun "it," "which-type attributives," and "other adverbial clause conjunctions (e.g., "since," "so that")".

While this study includes all seven official diplomatic interpreters from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs available for analysis, the relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Despite the extensive scope and duration of the compiled corpus, individual differences —such as personal style, professional background, and situational factors— may also influence the observed patterns. Consequently, the gender-related similarities and differences revealed by the multidimensional analysis should be regarded as exploratory. Rather than making broad generalizations, this research aims to provide a nuanced perspective and to encourage further investigation with larger samples and diverse institutional settings.

This paper also discusses the motivation for similarities and differences in interpreting styles between female and male interpreters. It is argued that keeping faithfulness to the source language leads to similar interpreter behavior, whereas different social roles and concern for target language practicality are

attributed to differences in choosing linguistic factors. Since this paper only investigates male and female interpreters from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, future efforts could probe into community interpreters. Furthermore, qualitative interviews are suggested to be applied to analyze why interpreters shape their interpreting style. It is hoped that the present research can enrich the limited literature on interpreters' styles, shed light on future studies, and improve interpreting teaching performance.

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