

An Unavoidable Error or an Intentional Strategy? Simultaneous Interpreters' Awareness of Omission

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Abstract

Simultaneous interpreting often involves omission, traditionally viewed as an error but increasingly recognized as a strategic choice to optimize fluency. This study examined interpreters' self-awareness regarding omission, investigating whether it stems from conscious strategy or cognitive overload. A structured questionnaire administered to 42 professional interpreters with diverse language combinations and experience levels revealed that omission is common, with 76% considering it intentional condensation rather than a mistake. Interpreters employed strategies like simplification (55%), pausing (43%), and replacing specific terms with general alternatives (59%), yet omission remained the primary coping mechanism, particularly under high cognitive demand. The findings align with Gile's (1999) Effort Models and Tightrope Hypothesis as well as Pym's (2008) risk-based distinction, emphasizing the role of contextual awareness in interpreters' decision-making. While experienced interpreters showed greater strategic awareness, many struggled to assess omission's impact. The study underscores omission as an unavoidable yet double-edged strategy, suggesting interpreter training curricula should emphasize the development of situational judgment, cognitive monitoring, and evaluative reflection, enabling practitioners to navigate deliberate omissions with both efficacy and ethical awareness. Future research should seek to synthesize theoretical inquiry, empirical research, and pedagogical innovation within interpreting studies.

Keywords: cognitive load, interpreter awareness, omission, simultaneous interpreting, strategy

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1. Introduction

In the context of simultaneous interpreting, omission refers to the deliberate or inadvertent exclusion of lexical items, phrases, or entire propositional units from the target-language rendition. Such omissions may range from function words to substantial semantic segments, potentially influencing the accuracy and completeness of the interpreted message. The phenomenon may arise due to a range of factors, including high cognitive load, temporal constraints inherent in the mode, or the interpreter's judgment regarding the informational redundancy or perceived irrelevance of certain content (Gile, 2009; Pöchhacker, 2004; Setton & Dawrant, 2016).

Historically conceptualized as an indicator of interpreter error or cognitive failure, recent scholarship has advanced a more nuanced understanding of this practice. Rather than uniformly signaling a deficiency in performance, omission is increasingly recognized as potentially reflective of strategic decision-making processes shaped by task complexity, cognitive constraints, and contextual factors (Barik, 1994; Gile, 2009; Pym, 2008). This inquiry sought to examine the interpretive dimensions of omission, particularly the extent to which interpreters are consciously aware of such instances and whether these omissions emerge as intentional strategies or involuntary lapses.

The degree of interpreter self-awareness in relation to omissions is a critical variable in interpreting performance. Empirical research suggests that professional interpreters, especially those with considerable experience, demonstrate a heightened metacognitive awareness of their cognitive load and processing limitations (Gile, 2011; Kalina, 2005; Shlesinger, 2000). This awareness enables them to detect and reflect upon omissions either during or immediately following the interpreting task. Such findings support the argument that omissions may not merely be the result of processing constraints, but also serve as deliberate adaptations aimed at preserving overall coherence, relevance, and communicative intent under temporal pressure (Setton & Dawrant, 2016; Pöchhacker, 2004).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Omission as an Error

Despite the potential for strategic omission, it is undeniable that many omissions occur unintentionally. The high-pressure environment of simultaneous interpreting leaves little room for error, and momentary lapses in attention or comprehension can lead to the loss of information. Moreover, the complexity of certain source texts, combined with the interpreter's limited cognitive resources, can inevitably result in unintentional omissions.

Omissions, marked by the complete absence of source content in the target language, have been central to error analysis in interpreting research (Barik, 1994; Pym, 2008). However, consensus remains elusive regarding the definition of omission and whether all instances should be construed as errors. Gile (1999), in a methodological innovation, asked participants to repeat the same interpreting task and observed that new errors and omissions (e/o's) appeared in the second attempt, even in segments previously interpreted correctly. This finding supports the "tightrope hypothesis" from his Effort Models, which attributes e/o's to interpreters operating at the threshold of their cognitive capacity rather than the inherent difficulty of the source text.

Gile's interpretation assumes that these errors follow minimal patterns; where no consistent correlation with specific features of the source text is evident, the omissions are attributed to cognitive overload. Nonetheless, this binary approach, differentiating between text-driven and cognitively induced errors, may oversimplify the phenomenon.

In interpreting studies, error analysis entails quantifying deviations between the source and target texts, particularly in relation to accuracy and fluency (Falbo, 2002). Errors are generally categorized as either accuracy-related or fluency-related, although the operationalization of these dimensions varies significantly across studies (Gile, 2011; Pio, 2003). In terms of source-target correspondence, multiple taxonomies have been proposed, yet a standardized classification remains lacking. Falbo (2002), for instance, includes generalizations as a form of information loss and subdivides them into understatement, overgeneralization, and loss of intensity, each representing a departure from source text fidelity.

While Gile (1998) equates errors and omissions with reduced quality, subsequent research problematizes this view. Pym (2008), for example, distinguishes between high-risk and low-risk omissions based on contextual relevance, suggesting that not all omissions

negatively affect message integrity. Viaggio (2002) and Gumul and Łyda (2007) further argue that although omissions can undermine audience trust, they may also enhance interpretive coherence when strategically applied. For the purposes of this study, omissions were regarded either as manifestations of cognitive overload, particularly among novices, or as deliberate strategies more frequently employed by experienced interpreters.

Fluency of delivery presents another dimension of performance evaluation, yet it is often more difficult to assess than the presence of errors. Gile (1995, 2009) contends that it is challenging to determine whether an acceptable output could have been improved without a standard for comparison. Moreover, Gile (2011) suggests that grammatical errors may serve as stronger indicators of interpreter control than omissions within otherwise error-free output.

Error occurrence is also influenced by the relationship between ‘difficulties’ and ‘problems.’ Nord (1991) distinguishes difficulties as subjective challenges experienced by individual interpreters, whereas problems are objective obstacles in translation. Within this framework, professional interpreters, due to greater expertise, are expected to navigate difficulties more effectively than students. Problems, in contrast, are more universal and cannot be completely mitigated. This dichotomy aligns with Gile’s (1995, 2009) concept of problem triggers (PTs), which contribute to increased cognitive strain. PTs, such as code-switching demands, can compromise interpretation quality, although tracing quality lapses directly to specific PTs remains analytically complex due to possible ‘failure sequences’ (Mazza, 2001; Meyer, 2008).

Altman (1994) maintains that all omissions yield information loss or semantic distortion. Conversely, Barik (1994) permits certain omissions, such as connectives, fillers, or articles, while classifying others as errors. Setton (1999) echoes this restrictive view, treating omissions as uncorrected speech errors resulting from attentional lapses.

2.1.2. Omission as a Strategy

Some scholars conceptualize omission as a coping strategy activated under duress. According to Gile (1995), speech rate, information density, speaker accent, and linguistic irregularities can hinder complete rendition, compelling interpreters to condense or omit material. These omissions, while shaped by contextual pressure, are not necessarily strategic choices but adaptive responses to cognitive overload and unclear source messages.

Jones (1998) introduces the concept of strategic omissions in specific scenarios, for instance, omitting statistical data or the sources of well-known quotations. Interpreters may also omit or add information to enhance clarity, meet audience expectations, or facilitate relay interpreting. While these practices are justifiable within professional norms, lay audiences may misconstrue them as errors, reflecting a divergence in perception between interpreters and end-users.

The tension between intuitive practices and scientific methodologies continues to shape interpreting research. Shlesinger (2000) emphasizes the need to reconcile controlled experiments with real-world conditions and psychological universals with task-specific observations. Although models like Gile's prioritize non-omission and comprehensive information transfer, user studies by Pöchhacker (2002), Shlesinger (1994), Niska (1999), and Kalina (2005) indicate that end-users often prioritize key content and overall delivery, rather than expecting verbatim fidelity.

2.1.3. Interpreter Cognition

Interpreter cognition significantly influences omission practices. Experience, for example, has been shown to shape strategic behaviour. Moser-Mercer (1996) notes that experienced interpreters demonstrate refined coping strategies. Zabala-beascoa (2000) defines strategies as goal-oriented behaviours aimed at optimizing performance, and various taxonomies exist to capture this complexity. Kalina (1998) emphasizes interference avoidance, while Bartłomiejczyk (2006) proposes a broader classification encompassing both receptive and productive strategies.

Self-correction is a cognitive strategy involving the monitoring of output both pre- and post-articulation (Gerver, 2002). Interpreters evaluate their output internally and make adjustments if necessary. Post-articulation corrections serve not only linguistic precision but also face-saving purposes (Jones, 2002). However, empirical research on self-correction in simultaneous interpreting remains sparse. This study thus aimed to explore differences in self-correction frequency between novice and professional interpreters.

The overarching question of whether omission is an intentional or unintentional phenomenon remains a central concern. While some research suggests that interpreters possess varying degrees of awareness regarding their omissions, the extent to which such omissions

are strategically employed requires further empirical investigation. A comprehensive understanding of the cognitive, contextual, and experiential factors influencing omission is essential to inform interpreter training and enhance overall performance.

3. Method

The present study employed a structured questionnaire to investigate the phenomenon of omission in simultaneous interpreting, particularly focusing on interpreters' awareness of and attitudes toward this practice. The research targeted professional interpreters with diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of experience, aiming to encompass a broad spectrum of interpreting contexts and perspectives.

Participants were recruited through professional networks, including LinkedIn® and interpreters' associations. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no personally identifiable information was collected to preserve respondent anonymity. This approach ensured both ethical compliance and candid disclosure.

The questionnaire itself was developed following a comprehensive review of the literature on omission, interpreter cognition, and strategic processing. It was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, employing a mix of closed-ended and open-ended items to capture nuanced insights while enabling comparative statistical analysis. Participants were allowed to select multiple applicable responses, thereby avoiding the imposition of binary choices and fostering more authentic reflections. To ensure clarity and relevance, a pilot study involving 20 academic and professional interpreters was conducted. Feedback from this group led to refinement of the questionnaire's content and structure, thereby enhancing its reliability and validity.

Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms®, allowing interpreters to respond at their convenience. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze frequency patterns in the responses, while open-ended responses were subjected to thematic qualitative analysis. This dual-layered analytical framework allowed for triangulation of findings, enhancing interpretive depth.

The questionnaire began by collecting demographic and professional background data. Items addressed years of interpreting experience, formal education and training in

translation/interpreting, institutional certification, primary language pairs, preferred interpreting settings (e.g., conference, legal, medical), and professional affiliations. Respondents were also asked to self-assess their cognitive endurance and duration of effective interpreting practice, dimensions particularly relevant to understanding omission within the framework of cognitive load.

3.1. Research Questions and Objectives

Subsequent sections focused on the central research questions: whether interpreters perceive their omissions as strategic or unintentional, the degree of their self-awareness, and the specific strategies employed when facing cognitive challenges. Items investigated not only the frequency and nature of omissions but also the interpreters' reflections on their consequences and the auxiliary strategies (e.g., simplification, generalization, pausing) they utilize in high-pressure scenarios. A critical design feature of the questionnaire was its dynamic filtering mechanism: participants who denied any experience with omission or failed to demonstrate conscious awareness of its occurrence were automatically restricted from proceeding to further items. This ensured that subsequent responses originated from interpreters with relevant experiential grounding, thereby preserving data validity for the focal constructs.

The study's objectives, then, were twofold: first, to ascertain the extent to which interpreters acknowledge and reflect upon omission in their own practice; second, to explore how they manage the cognitive and temporal constraints that may give rise to such instances. Through this integrative methodological approach, the study aimed to generate empirical insights into the cognitive realism of interpreting practice, foregrounding the strategic dimension of omission within the broader discourse of interpreter performance and professional training.

4. Results and Discussion

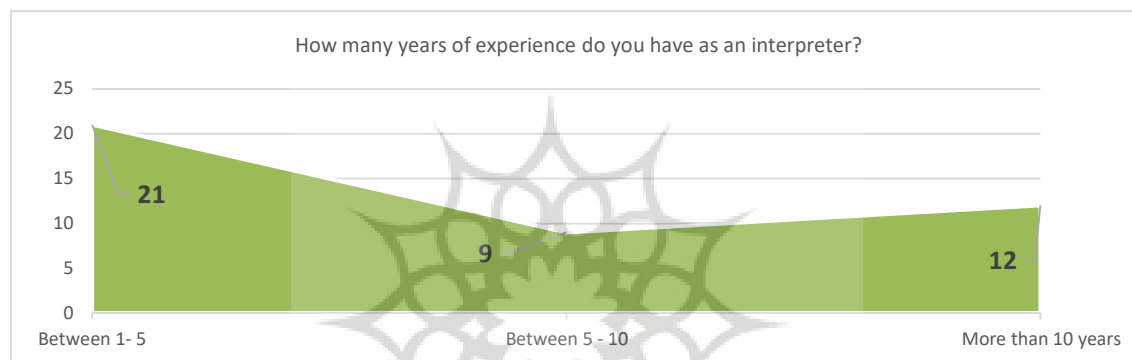
4.1. Basic Information

The responses to these questions revealed meaningful patterns, some of which are analyzed in detail in this section. Yet, prior to the more specified questions, it is pertinent to elaborate on some basic criteria of the participants. They, the interpreters, were asked to reflect on their level of experience and the language pair(s) they work with, as well as the area of their expertise. In

general, 42 valid answers were received from the participants. Regarding their basic information and background, it turned out that 21 of the interpreters fell into the category of “1-5 years of experience,” which formed 50% of the total population. The second major category belonged to those who have been working professionally as an interpreter for “more than 10 years,” representing 29% of the total number of participants in the participant pool. The remaining 21% were those who had between “5-10 years of professional experience” (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Years of Professional Practice



As academic and specialized education play a crucial role in this profession, the participants were accordingly asked to determine if they have had any academic education and/or if there was any sort of training they have gone through, and also if they are certified by any institutions. Regarding this, 29 people (69%) categorized themselves under the option of “*Having academic education/training in translation/interpreting, THOUGH NOT being certified.*” The following category was those who “*Had academic education/training in translation/interpreting AND they are certified,*” including 11 interpreters (26%) (see Figure 2).

Following the same trend, the participants were asked to determine the level of academic degree they hold; the majority of participants were found to hold a “*master’s degree,*” shaping 62% of the population, followed by the subsequent group holding bachelor's degrees, being 21%. Out of the total number of 42 participants, five of them were “*PhD holders,*” and 2 people categorized themselves as “*not having any academic degree related to translation and interpreting*” (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

Academic Education & Certifications

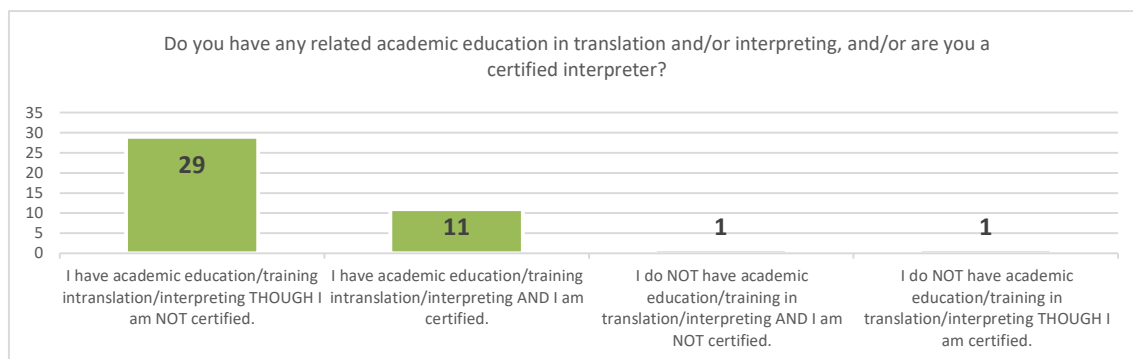
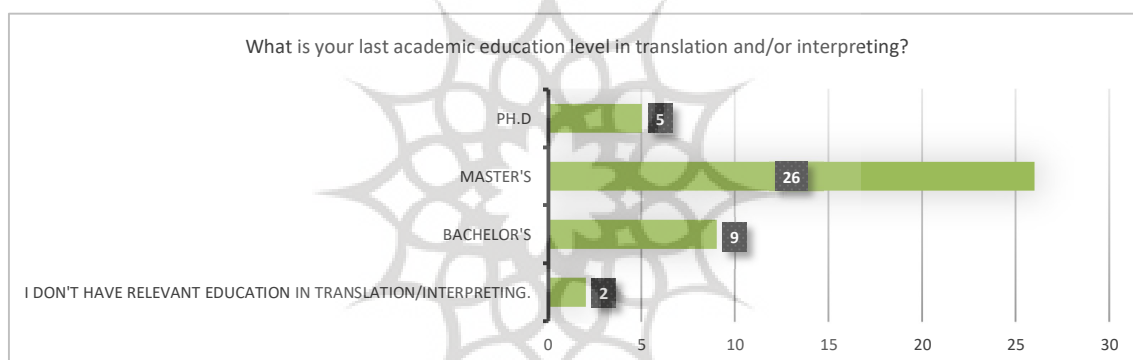


Figure 3

Academic Degrees



It was also important to know whether the participants had received any additional training apart from their academic education. In this regard, 34 interpreters confirmed that they have gone through some additional training, forming 81% of the population (34 individuals), and the remaining 19% of the responses to this question were negative (see Appendix A). Also, it was observed that there is a ratio of 60%-40% among the participants regarding the case of being a member in any specialized interpreting/translation association/organization, the former being the group who responded “positive” (see Appendix A).

As the nature of interpreting is such that interpreters are mostly multilingual, it was aimed to investigate the most frequent working language pairs among our participants. English (23) is the dominant “source” language among the total number of 18 distinct languages, followed by French (17) as the second most frequently selected language, followed by Italian

(13), German (10), and Spanish (9). Yet, the spectrum of the source languages does not stop there and some responses were received from the interpreters in other languages such as Hungarian (4), Russian (2), Montenegrin (1), Arabic (1), Polish (1), Turkish (1), Romanian (1), Hindi (1), Urdu (1), Punjabi (1), Mirpuri (1), Portuguese (1), and Serbian (1) (see Appendix A).

With regards to the “target” languages, the previous total number of languages narrows to 11, dominated by English (26), followed by Italian (20), Spanish (11), French (9), German (5), Hungarian (2), Persian (1), Portuguese (1), Arabic (1), Russian (1), Romanian (1) (see Appendix A).

Another differentiating factor among the participants was their area of expertise, in which they are mostly prominent, and they accept projects mainly in those categories. Two categories of *conference/political* and *community/NGO* were the first two, which received an equal number of 25 responses. The second ranking is again shared by two distinct categories of *business/marketing* and *humanities/social sciences*, each receiving 20 responses; Next in the sequence is the *technical/sciences* field, which was chosen by 19 people. The fourth frequent expertise belongs to the area of *medical/healthcare* (15); proceeding with *court/legal* (13), *religious/church* (9), *sports/entertainment* (8), *fashion/beauty* (7), *farming/environment* (2), *food/beverage* (1), were the rest of the fields of expertise among the interpreters (see Appendix A).

4.2. Interpreters' Endurance in Practice

As discussed frequently in the literature, simultaneous interpreting is a highly demanding task with regard to the mental and cognitive capabilities; having this presumption, the interpreters were asked to self-reflect on the duration of continuous interpreting they can endure before they (feel the need to) hand over the microphone to their boothmate. To find out more specifically, the participants were provided three main categories to choose from. As presented in the following table, a huge and significant majority of the participants, shaping 84% of the total, selected the category implying a duration of interpreting between 15 and 30 minutes as the maximum amount of time they feel the most comfortable handling interpreting on their own in one go. With a big gap, ranks second, 13% of the participants announced that they are able to handle more than 30 minutes (regardless of having a boothmate or working alone).

Here, the disclaimer of having or not having a boothmate was inserted to make sure that those interpreters are genuinely capable of handling more than 30 minutes of interpreting, or they may do so just in case of not having a boothmate, which is professionally not recommended (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Preferred Duration of Non-Stop Interpreting

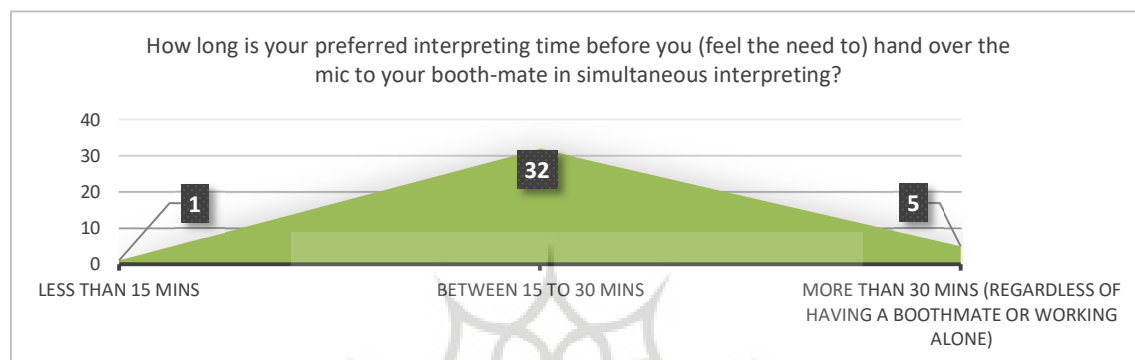
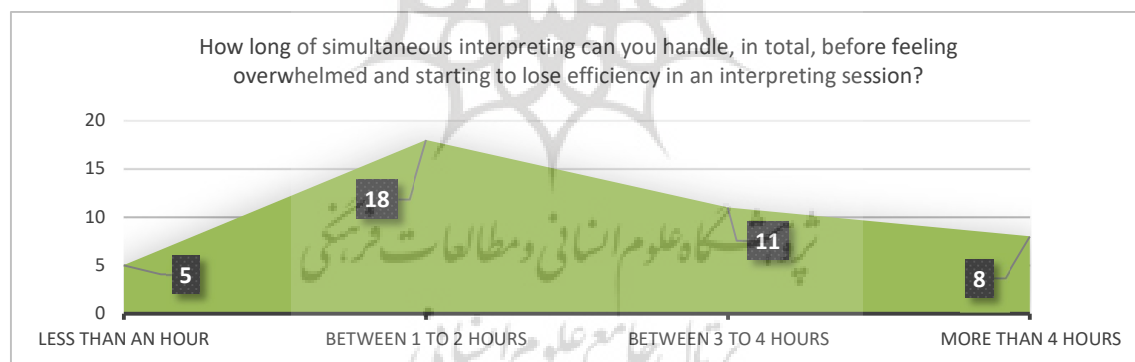


Figure 5

Preferred Duration of Interpreting in Total



However, another dimension worth examination was the total duration that an interpreter would be in their optimum performance capability; by the following question on Figure 5, a self-reflection on interpreters' preferences on this matter was intended. As the results show, the duration that almost half (43%) of the participants opted for was *between 1 and 2 hours* of interpreting task before they feel overwhelmed to the extent that they lose efficiency. It is not far from the expectations that there could be those whose cognitive endurance allows them to go further and handle *between 3 and 4 hours* of simultaneous

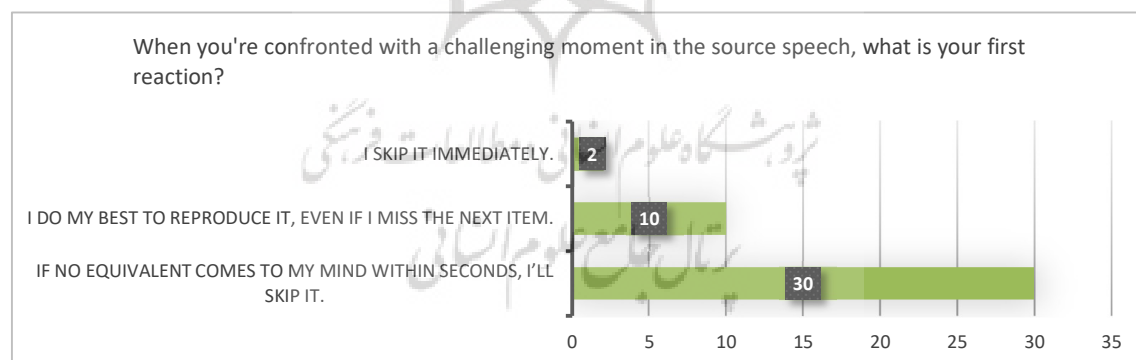
interpreting; this group constituted 26% of the participants. Interestingly, it was observed that 8 out of 42 participants opted for a duration of *more than 4 hours* and were still cognitively capable of continuing with the task. It is worth mentioning that 12% of the interpreters found it more comfortable for them to stay *under 1 hour* of interpreting which itself is a topic warranting further investigation to find out what the main reason for such uncertainty of one's professional skills and ability can be, where it does not appear practical to pursue this profession if that is the highest of one's capability as an interpreter whom is normally expected to be able to provide their service in official meetings and conferences which can take long.

4.3. Self-Awareness in Omission

The question of whether omissions are intentional or unintentional strategies hinges on the interpreter's self-awareness and the context of the interpretation. Research suggests that omissions can be both deliberate and accidental, influenced by a combination of conscious decision-making and unconscious cognitive processes. To investigate this empirically, the strategy of *skipping* the challenging utterances was directly questioned. The answers are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

The First Reaction to a Challenge



As demonstrated in Figure 6, the most common reaction is to *skip the challenging moment if no equivalent comes to mind within seconds*. This response has the highest frequency, 71% of the whole. Followed by the second most common reaction, which is *trying and reproducing the challenging moment, even if it means missing the next item*, shaping 24% of the responses. Yet, the least common reaction was *to skip the challenging moment*

immediately, with only 2 participants (5%) choosing this option. The overall view is that most participants tend to prioritize understanding and fluency over perfect reproduction when encountering challenging moments in a source speech. They are more likely to skip or attempt to paraphrase rather than risk missing the subsequent content.

In order to precisely distinguish between those participants who were aware of “omission” and those who were not, two follow-up questions were formulated. Firstly, the participants were asked whether they had ever left out any segments of the source speech in their output production. Based on professional experience and the nature of the interpreting task, it is implausible that a professional interpreter has never omitted any portion of the input; with this assumption, the questionnaire was structured in a way that the participants who gave a negative response to this, meaning they have never experienced omitting anything, were automatically excluded and limited from proceeding with the survey. The reason behind this was the fact that the experience of the excluded participants was not in line with the purpose of this investigation. Receiving 6 negative answers reduced the number of the remaining participants to 36 (out of 42). In the succeeding step, the participants were asked to self-reflect on how consciously they confront the phenomenon of omission (see Figure 7).

As illustrated in Figure 7, the majority of the participants reported that they *automatically skip items or sections during a speech but subsequently reflect on these instances*, with 18 participants indicating this response. Also, a significant portion of the participants (14 interpreters) were *consciously aware of when they omitted information and made this decision deliberately*. These two options form close to 90% of the whole; the data sharply indicate that while spontaneous omissions occur, a considerable number of the participants engage in thoughtful decision-making regarding what to include and exclude from their speech by doing it purposefully or reflecting on it afterwards. Only a small group of the participants (3 out of 36) claimed that they unconsciously skip content without any subsequent reflection. At this phase, these participants were also restricted from continuing with additional questions. Conducting a more detailed investigation, this phenomenon was investigated in more detail by asking the participants to elaborate on their conscious decision to leave out a section from the source utterance (see Figure 8).

Figure 7

Awareness & Conscious Decision

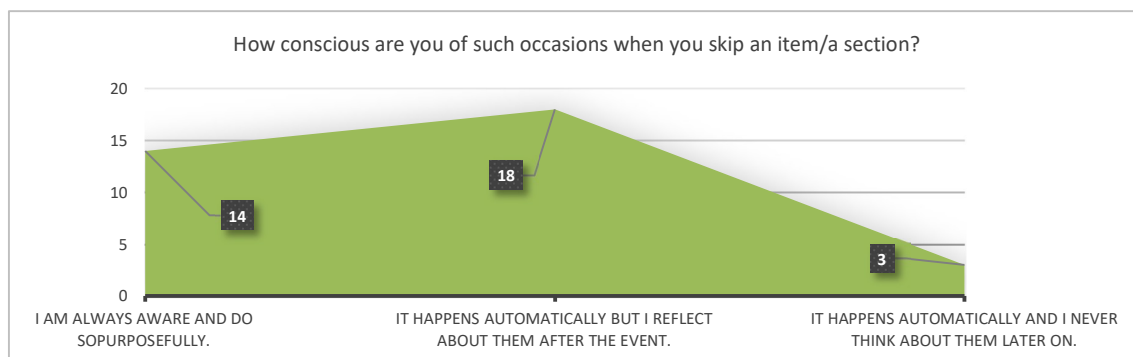
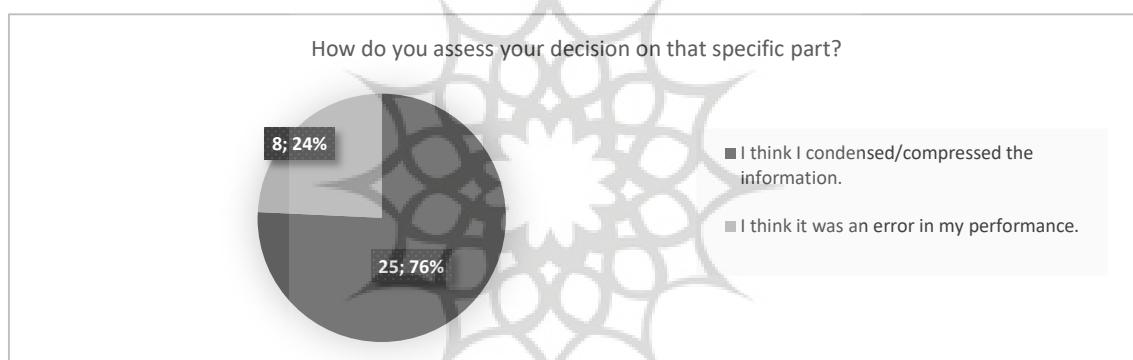


Figure 8

Self-Assessment 1



As shown in Figure 8, most of the participants (76%) showed the tendency to attribute their decisions on the specific omitted part *to condense or compress content* rather than an unintentional mistake. A minority of the participants (8 out of 33) perceived their decision as an *error in performance*, which accounted for 24% of responses. This may indicate a strategic approach to information management during speech delivery, potentially influenced by time constraints, audience considerations, personal preferences, or specific task requirements.

The preceding figure (Figure 8) revealed that most interpreters intentionally condense or compress information during speech delivery. It was intended to have a secondary inquiry to confirm and validate the supposed results; for this, the following question was formulated with regard to the interpreters' self-assessment of the consequence of skipping/omitting a segment (see Figure 9).

Figure 9
Self-Assessment 2



As displayed in Figure 9, mostly the interpreters *were not sure if leaving out the item harms the message*, receiving 15 responses on this option, making 46% of the whole. Followed by the second most common response, suggesting that the interpreters believed *leaving out the item doesn't harm the message*, with a frequency of 14. The least common response (12%) was that interpreters *think leaving out the item harms the message*. In general, this figure indicates that most interpreters have uncertainty about the consequences of leaving out an item.

As Figure 9 reveals that interpreters are often uncertain about the consequences of their decision to omit information, this finding appears to contradict the previous notion of a purely strategic approach. It suggests a potential discrepancy between the intended outcome (condensing information) and the perceived impact on the message. Some possible interpretations can be:

Uncertainty in assessment: Interpreters might be skilled at condensing information but lack confidence in evaluating the impact of their omissions on the overall message.

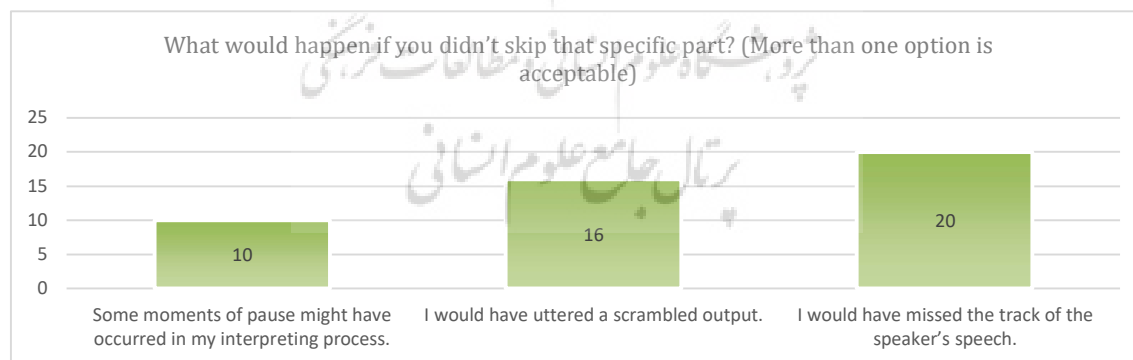
Complexity of the task: The act of interpreting is inherently challenging, making it difficult to accurately assess the consequences of every decision in real-time.

Subjective nature of impact: The impact of omitted information might vary depending on the audience, context, and other factors, making it challenging to provide a definitive assessment.

In essence, while interpreters often make conscious choices to omit information, they may not always have a clear mindset on the full implications of their decisions. To emphasize the trade-offs involved in deciding to omit information during interpreting, the following question (Figure 10) was formulated:

The participants were provided with three potential consequences of omitting information during interpreting. The most frequent consequence chosen was *missing the track of the speaker's speech* (20 responses), accounting for 43% of the whole. The second most frequent consequence (35%) was *uttering scrambled output* (16 responses), and the least frequent consequence (22%) was *experiencing some moments of pause in the interpreting process* (10 responses). The high frequency of "missing the track of the speaker's speech" suggests that omitting information may substantially disrupt the interpreter's capacity to maintain alignment with the original message. This finding reinforces the complexity of the interpreting task and the potential challenges associated with information reduction. Additionally, the occurrence of "scrambled output" indicates that attempting to condense information can lead to errors or inaccuracies in the interpreted message, which itself supports the idea that while interpreters may aim to simplify the content, it can sometimes result in unintended consequences.

Figure 10
Supposed Consequences



In order to shed light on complementary insights into the strategies interpreters use to handle challenging moments and expand on the information provided in the previous graph about the consequences of omission, the final question of the survey asked the participants to

opt for as many of the potential strategies, except for omitting the segment, that they frequently employ while dealing with such challenges (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

Other Potential Strategies

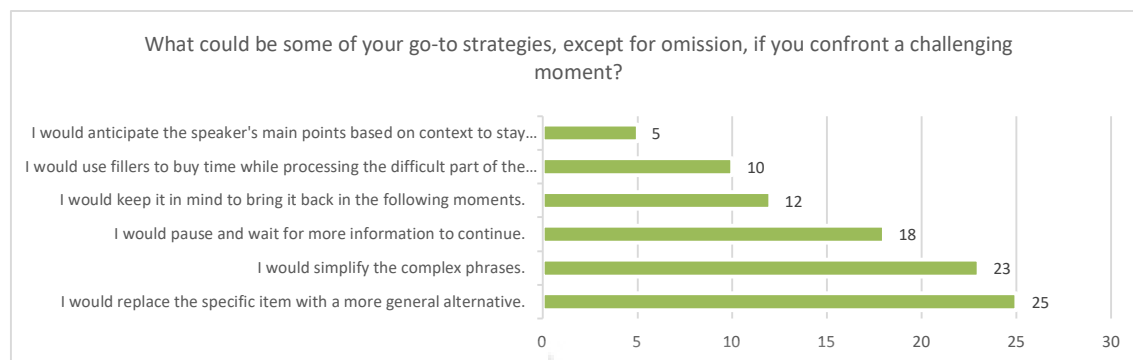


Figure 11 presents the frequency of different strategies employed by interpreters when encountering challenging moments during their work, excluding omission. To sum it up, the most frequent strategies identified were:

- Replacing specific items with general alternatives: 25 responses
- Simplifying complex phrases: 23 responses
- Pausing and waiting for more information: 18 responses
- And the less frequent strategies were:
- Keeping the difficult part in mind for later: 12 responses
- Using fillers to manage processing time: 10 responses
- Anticipating the speaker's main points: 5 responses

Overall, the results suggest that interpreters have a repertoire of strategies to manage challenging situations, with a clear preference for simplification, replacement, and pausing. The outcomes also indicate that anticipation and the use of fillers are less commonly used strategies. This might suggest that interpreters often encounter challenges unexpectedly or that they rely more on immediate adaptation rather than predictive planning in such situations.

These observations, pointing to the selective and context-sensitive nature of many omissions identified in the Persian-English simultaneous interpreting data, invite a broader interpretive framing that transcends traditional deficit-oriented views of interpreter performance. Rather than conceptualizing omission solely as a failure to render source-language content, the findings underscore the interpreter's active role in dynamically managing cognitive and communicative constraints. Such insights force a reassessment of the normative assumptions promoting conventional error taxonomies and call for alignment with more recent theoretical models that account for the strategic and adaptive nature of interpreting.

In this context, it is particularly instructive to consider how the present results interface with the analytical frameworks proposed by Setton and Dawrant (2016), whose work has contributed significantly to reconceptualizing omission as a functionally motivated and cognitively grounded strategy within the simultaneity of bilingual speech production. Setton and Dawrant (2016) underscore that omissions in simultaneous interpreting often function as adaptive strategies rather than simple indicators of interpreter failure. Their conceptualization of simultaneous interpreting as a form of “real-time bilingual speech production” highlights the interpretive agency exercised under conditions of cognitive load and time pressure, wherein interpreters must prioritize propositional meaning, coherence, and listener relevance over lexical fidelity.

The current analysis affirms this view by demonstrating that many omissions observed in the Persian-English data set were not random or symptomatic of processing breakdowns, but instead reflected deliberate, context-sensitive decisions to maintain communicative efficacy. Furthermore, the present study contributes to the growing body of literature that calls for a re-evaluation of traditional error-based frameworks in interpreting assessment frameworks, which often fail to capture the pragmatic and strategic dimensions of interpreter performance. In this regard, the alignment between this study's results and the theoretical lens provided by Setton and Dawrant suggests the need for a more functionally-oriented approach to evaluating omissions, one that accounts for the dynamic interplay between cognitive constraints and communicative intent in simultaneous interpreting.

5. Limitations and Future Perspectives

A questionnaire survey distributed to simultaneous interpreters investigating the concept of omission and intentionality in interpreting encountered several limitations. With regards to the data collection methodology, it should always be considered that relying on the participants' self-reported experiences may introduce biases or inaccuracies in the data. Foremost among these is the need for observational and process-oriented research methodologies capable of capturing interpreters' decision-making in real time. The reliance on self-reported data in the present study, while informative, necessarily limits the granularity with which cognitive mechanisms can be analyzed.

It is worth mentioning that the collected data primarily focuses on information omission, self-awareness, and self-assessment, highlighting the need for further studies of other potential challenges interpreters might face. Expanding the empirical base to include larger and more diverse sample groups of interpreters would improve the generalizability of findings, as the response rates can be considered low or non-representative of the wider population of simultaneous interpreters.

Additionally, comparative research that examines omission behaviors across varying levels of interpreter experience, particularly between novice and expert practitioners, would provide valuable insights into the developmental trajectory of strategic competence. Tracing how awareness, control, and evaluation of omissions evolve with professional maturity could inform more targeted pedagogical interventions at different stages of interpreter training. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons, in particular, would shed light on whether strategic approaches to omission are universally shared or culturally conditioned; correspondingly, providing detailed information about the specific types of interpreting tasks or contexts involved can help the understanding of the findings' applicability.

In sum, a comprehensive research agenda that integrates cognitive, contextual, and experiential dimensions is essential to developing a holistic understanding of omission in simultaneous interpreting. Such an agenda would not only refine theoretical models but also provide evidence-based guidance for interpreter training, quality assessment, and professional development.

6. Conclusion

As previously discussed, omission in simultaneous interpreting is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by both intentional strategies and unintentional constraints. This study advances the understanding of omission in simultaneous interpreting by reconciling theoretical dichotomies between error and strategy through empirical investigation. Drawing on responses from 42 professional interpreters with varying levels of experience and linguistic backgrounds, the research compellingly demonstrated that omission is not a monolithic error but rather a dynamic phenomenon conditioned by cognitive constraints, task demands, and, most notably, strategic intentionality.

The results showed that omission is not merely symptomatic of cognitive failure but is often employed with strategic intent. Specifically, 76% of interpreters characterized their omissions as deliberate attempts to condense or simplify speech content, while nearly 90% demonstrated awareness, either in-the-moment or retrospective, of such decisions. Yet, the findings also exposed a critical gap: 46% of interpreters were uncertain about the communicative consequences of their omissions.

While omissions were most frequently associated with losing the thread of the speaker or producing scrambled output, interpreters also relied heavily on generalization and simplification as auxiliary strategies. These results underscore the precarious balance interpreters must maintain between cognitive economy and message integrity.

The data revealed that a majority of interpreters are not only aware of their omissions but also often engage in post hoc reflection or deliberate content condensation, highlighting the presence of metacognitive processing in real-time interpreting. This nuanced awareness aligns with Gile's (1999) Effort Models and Tighrope Hypothesis, reinforcing the interpretation of omission as a functional response to cognitive overload rather than a mere lapse. Furthermore, the study supports Pym's (2008) risk-based taxonomy, wherein omissions are evaluated according to their impact on communicative intent rather than fidelity alone.

Based on the analysis of the provided data, one can draw the conclusions about interpreters' decision-making processes and challenges that interpreters are strategic decision-makers, as they consciously omit information to manage time and maintain fluency. However, they are often uncertain about the impact of these decisions on the target message. This disconnect underscores the need for a pedagogical model that moves beyond the binary

classification of omission as either failure or success, and instead embraces it as a context-dependent, skill-based decision.

Training programs are suggested to emphasize the development of decision-making skills that enable interpreters to distinguish between omissions that undermine communicative intent and those that enhance clarity or efficiency under temporal constraints. Equally essential is the cultivation of metacognitive awareness, whereby student interpreters learn to monitor their output in real time and engage in post-task reflection to refine their strategic repertoire.

Pedagogical and evaluative adjustments would possibly bridge the current gap between interpreting theory, professional expectation, and cognitive reality. They would also empower interpreters to make more confident, context-sensitive decisions in the booth. Simulated high-demand interpreting environments, such as those involving dense source texts or accelerated speech rates, can be particularly effective in fostering adaptive strategies. These practice scenarios should be accompanied by structured feedback and analytical debriefings to deepen students' understanding of the trade-offs inherent in real-time omission.

Additionally, there is a pressing need for the development of comprehensive, bilingual interpreting corpora, particularly involving linguistically and culturally underrepresented language pairs such as Persian and English, to facilitate more granular, data-driven investigations into omission patterns and their pragmatic motivations. The formulation of refined evaluative protocols capable of discerning between purposeful, strategic omissions and those resulting from processing failures would further enhance both academic assessments and professional standards.

Comparative empirical studies across interpreting modes and diverse language combinations would also yield valuable insights into the variability and universality of omission as a discourse strategy. Crucially, sustained collaboration between professional interpreters and academic researchers should be prioritized, as such partnerships are essential for grounding theoretical models in authentic practice and ensuring the bidirectional flow of knowledge between scholarly inquiry and applied interpreting contexts.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) certify/certifies that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in the present research paper.

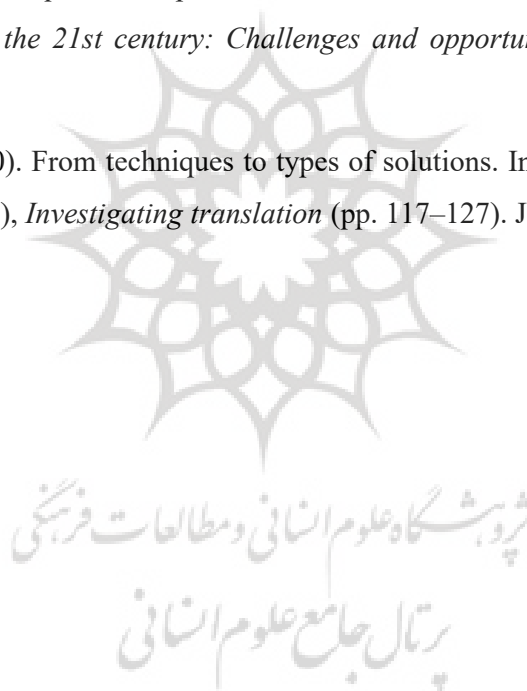


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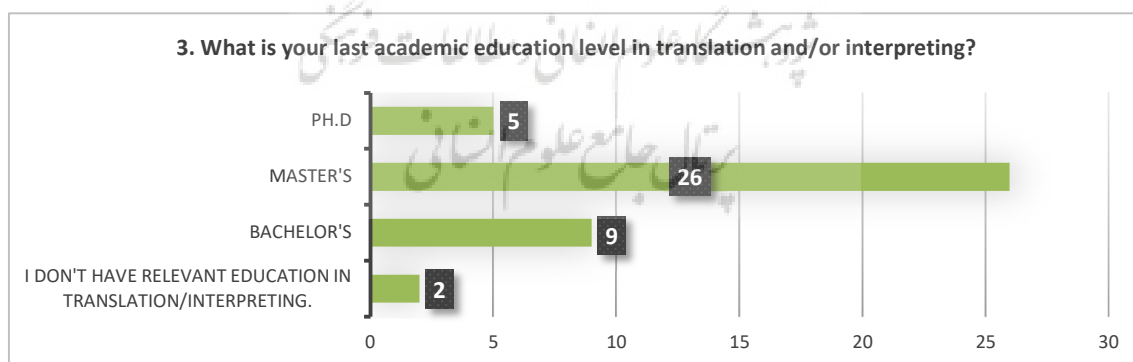
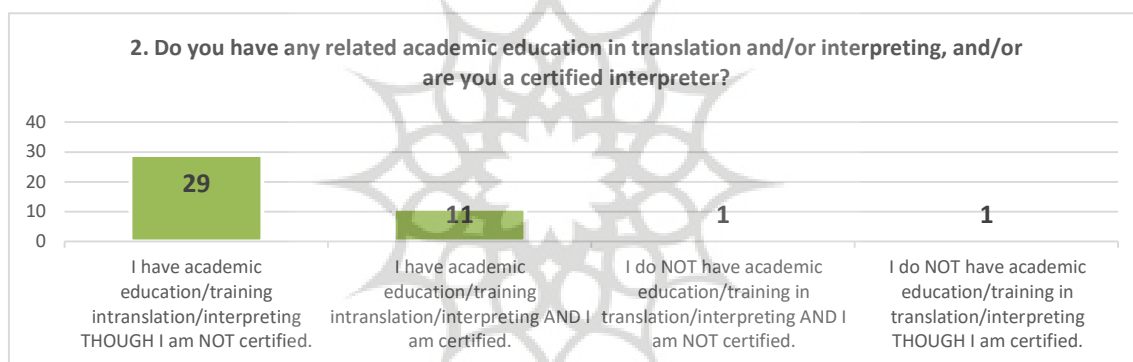
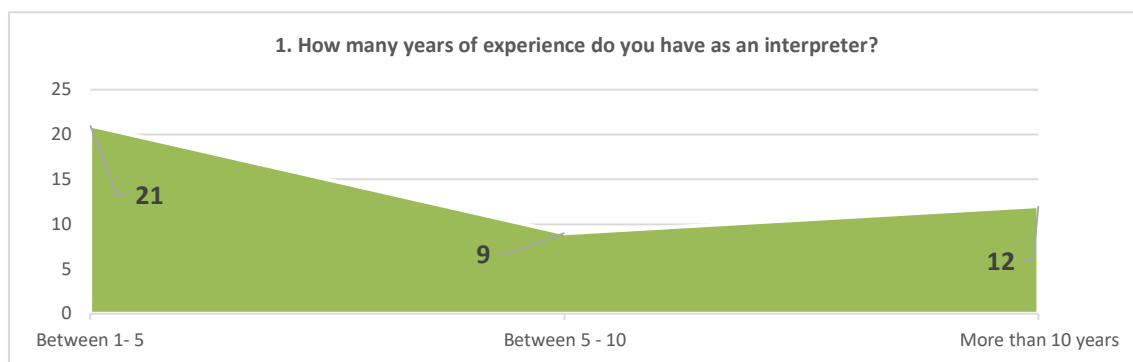
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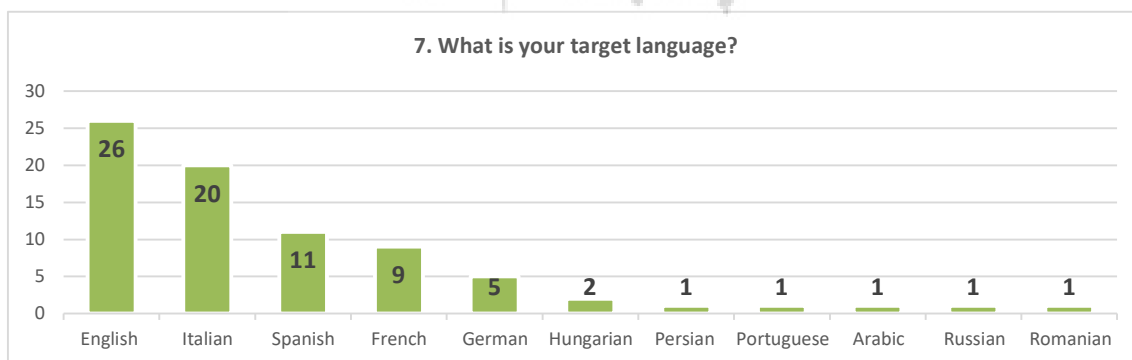
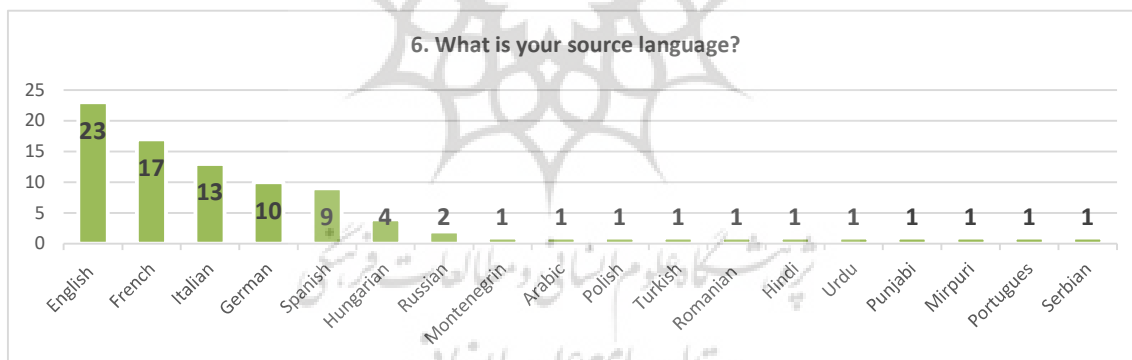
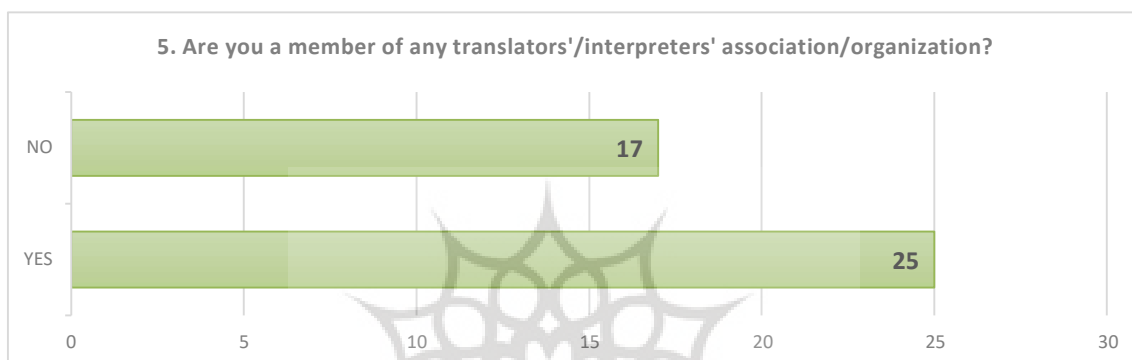
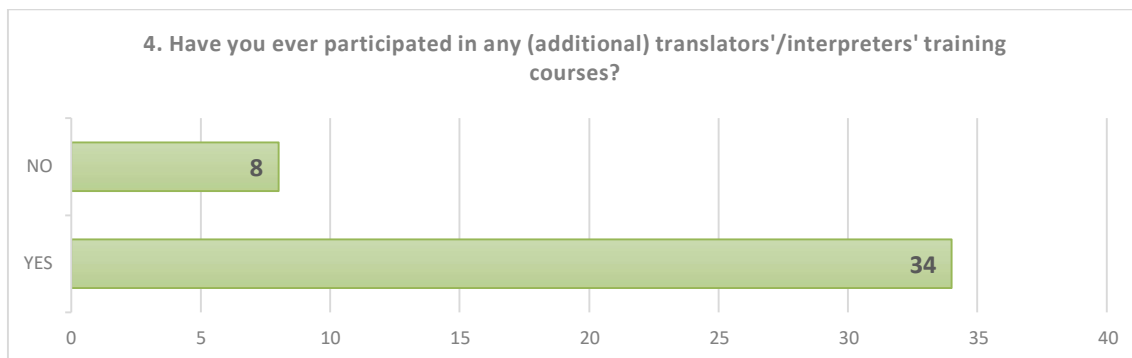


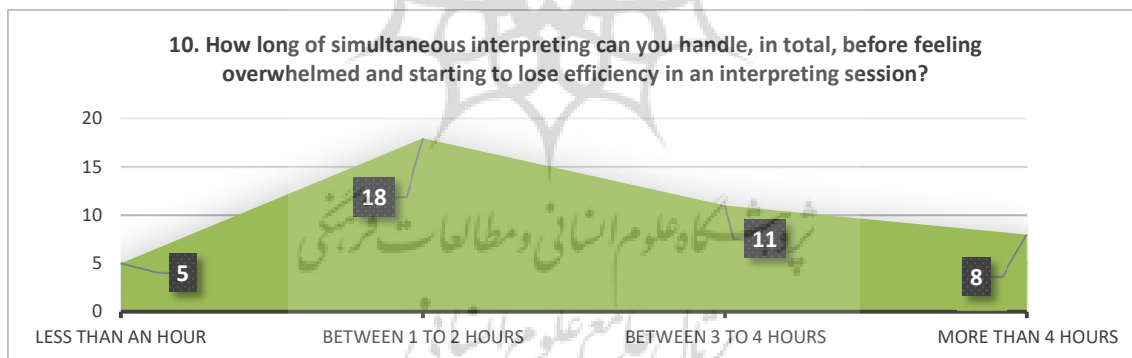
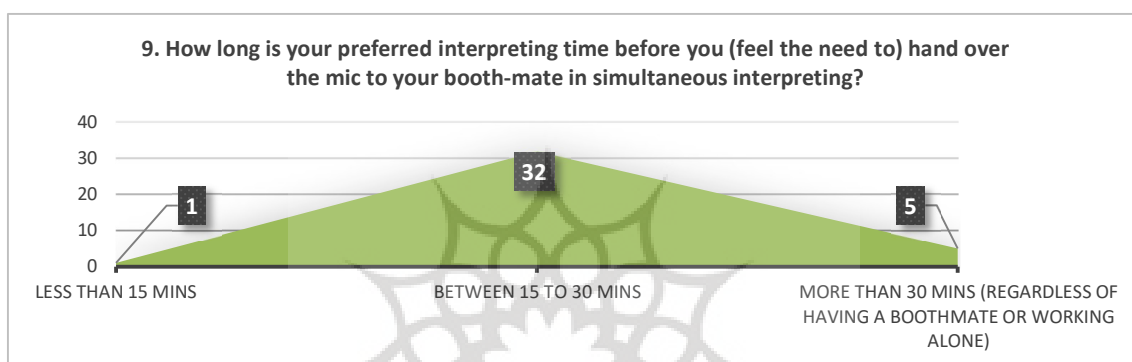
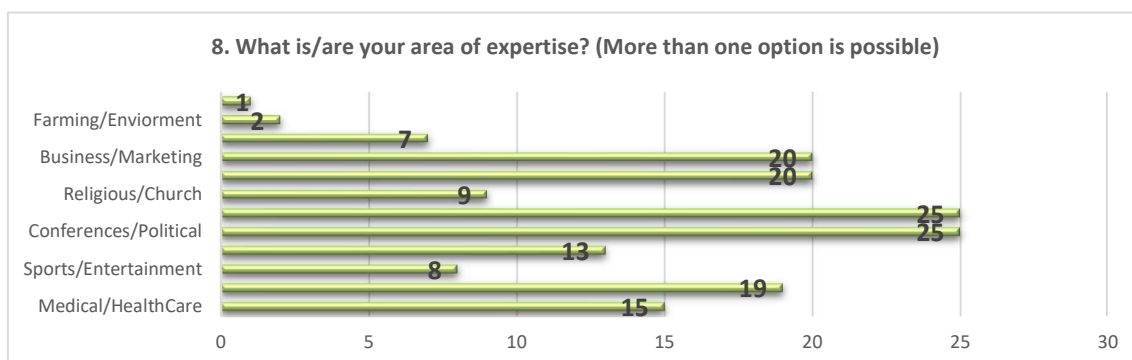
Appendices

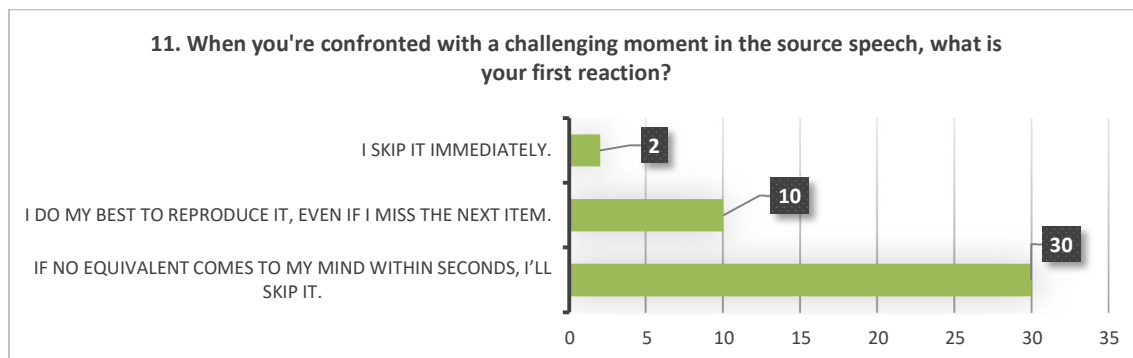
Appendix A

Questions & the Results:

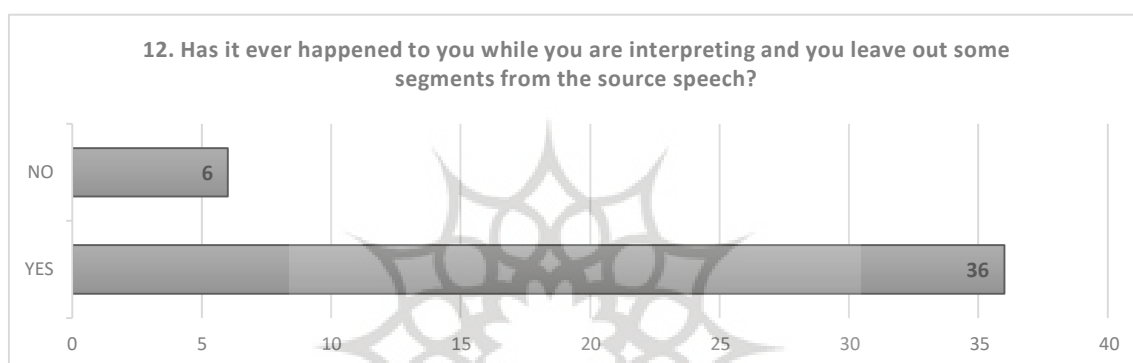




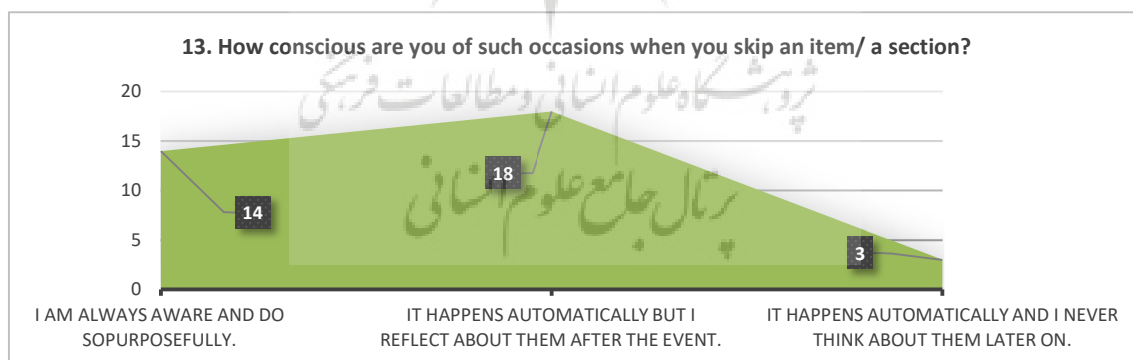




Q12. Those who answered “NO” were stopped from proceeding with the rest of the survey.

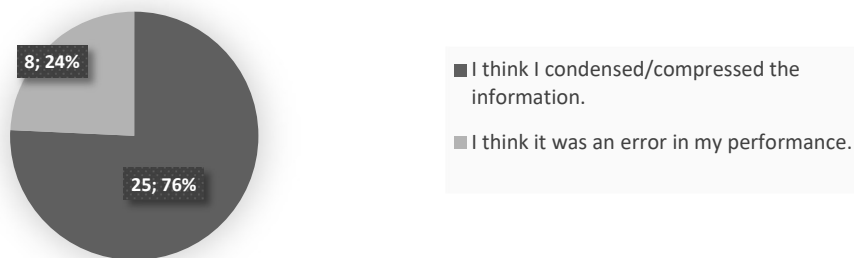


Q. 13 From question 13, the number of respondents reduces to “36”; those who did not reflect on “omission” were stopped from proceeding with the survey.



Q14. From here, the number of respondents reduces to 33.

14. How do you assess your decision on that specific part?



15. How do you (as the interpreter) assess the consequence of your decision to leave out the item?



16. What would happen if you didn't skip that specific part? (More than one option is acceptable)



17. What could be some of your go-to strategies, except for omission, if you confront a challenging moment?

