IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT IN INTERPRETED PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES: THE CONFERENCE INTERPRETER AS MEANING CO-CONSTRUCTOR

PATRYK DOBKIEWICZ[1]

ABSTRACT

Studies of interpreted political discourses in multiple contexts and language combinations have shown interpreters mitigating or intensifying ideologically loaded source texts. This article employs methods of the Discourse-Historical Approach to analyse ideological shifts between source texts and target texts across the left-right political spectrum. Qualitative analysis of a set of English-language European Parliament speeches and their interpretations into Polish identifies a variety of linguistic means through which the ideological load of source text references to political actors and phenomena may be weakened or strengthened. The results of a quantitative analysis point towards verb phrases being more susceptible to ideological shift than noun phrases, while the relationship between ideological shift and political orientation of the speaker requires further study. This paper contributes to the growing body of research highlighting the ideological and discourse-constructive potential of interpreters.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Studies; ideological shift; conference interpreting; political discourse; European Parliament.

1. Introduction

The crucial role that written translation and interpreting play in global, multilingual societies is perhaps most evident in the world of politics. In international organisations such as the European Union, real-time debates between participants speaking in their different native languages are made possible by simultaneous interpretation. The interpreters themselves have been traditionally perceived as "clear conduits", almost machine-like beings who switch the linguistic code between source text (ST) and target text (TT) but alter nothing in the meaning of the interpreted speech (e.g., Jones 2002: 4; Gile 2009: 53).

---

[1]   Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań. Grunwaldzka 6, 60-780, Poznań, Poland. patdob1@amu.edu.pl

Although this view of the profession persists in interpreter training (e.g., Gile 2009), institutional guidelines (Seeber & Zelger 2007), and the public perception (Diriker 2011), an increasing number of researchers have been exploring ideas of interpreter agency (e.g., Diriker 2004; Monacelli 2009), understood as the (self-)awareness of interpreters' active participation in meaning-making, as opposed to mere "recoding" of messages. More recent studies have drawn attention to a possible direct influence of interpreters on the meaning of the TT and, by extension, to their co-constructive role in political discourses. In studies of interpreted European Parliament discourse, Beaton-Thome (2013) has shown examples of the "ideological negotiation of lexical labels", while Bartłomiejczyk (2016; 2020) has pointed out interpreters' tendencies to mitigate face-threatening speeches delivered by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Meanwhile, Gu and Tipton (2020) and Gao (2021) observed an opposite trend, of ideological intensification, in analyses of Chinese Premiers' press conferences and their interpretations into English.

While the studies listed above examined individual speakers, debates or ideological positions, this paper builds on them by analysing source texts and target texts across the ideological spectrum in multiple European Parliament plenary debates. The analysis, rooted in the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak 2009; Reisigl 2018), investigates whether ideological shifts can be observed between ideologically loaded nomination and predication tokens (linguistic realisations of nomination and predication strategies in the form of noun and verb phrases) in English ST speeches and Polish TT interpretations, and whether there is a correlation between the shift and the ideological orientation of the ST speaker. In particular, the focus is on two interrelated research questions:

(1) Do interpreters reproduce the meaning of ideologically salient ST tokens without any ideological shift, or do they mitigate or intensify them in the TT?

(2) Is there any systematic correlation between the ideological shift and the ideological orientation of the ST speakers?

2. Conference interpreting and interpreter agency

The notion that interpretation is not performed in a contextless void by contextless interpreters has been explored since at least the 1970s. The *theorie du sens* developed by Danica Seleskovitch expanded the integration between interpreting and cognitive science, and in doing so replaced machine-like, linguistic transcoding with deverbalized meaning transfer as the widely-accepted primary process in interpreting (Pöchhacker 2004). If communication between two parties is understood as the transmission and interpretation of subjective

mental models (van Dijk 2018), the inclusion of a third party, the interpreter, between them introduces an intermediate stage at which meanings can be altered. This assumption has opened up avenues of exploring interpreters as meaning (co-)constructors, not just conduits. However, despite the paradigm shift in Interpreting Studies and our growing understanding of human communication in general, interpreter agency remains an understudied issue. Even if the meaning-constructing potential of interpreters is acknowledged by researchers, such as in Seeber's and Zelger's (2007) exploration of the ethics of conference interpreting and alteration of source text meaning in the target text, interpreters still tend to be perceived as primarily "transmitters, not holders of information" (Seeber & Zelger 2007: 297).

This view of interpreting remains influential in interpreter training, where Gile (2009: 53) establishes that the "'neutral', 'transparent' or 'conduit' role" of the conference interpreter, although "somewhat idealized", "still deserves to be taught". Similarly, in institutional guidelines and professional codes, the role of the interpreter has been described as "neutral", "unobtrusive" and "invisible" (Setton & Dawrant 2016: 382), while faithfulness to the speaker is taken to be a matter of ethical conduct (Seeber & Zelger 2007: 291). This extends to the public perception of the profession. Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 7–8) point out that when newspapers report interpreted or translated statements by politicians, any mention of the interpreter or translator is usually avoided. When the work of interpreters is acknowledged, the media "propagate a very rigid and restricted view of interpreting that foregrounds 'loyalty to the words of the speakers'" with praise and criticism of interpreters dependent on this "highly subjective yardstick" Diriker (2011: 34).

Such views appear to be at odds with how interpreters see their own work. Ethnographic studies such as Angelelli's (2004) and Duflou's (2016) explorations of interpreters' self-perception point to a growing awareness of agency among professionals working in the field. Monacelli (2009) investigated the issue of interpreter agency by focusing on the face-threatening nature of the activity. The characteristics of the profession demand from those who practise it constant negotiation of their own footing, with Monacelli (2009: 82) going so far as to claim that interpreters' "main loyalty (…) is ultimately to themselves and to the furthering of their professional capacity". In an experimental study that appears to support this claim, Warchał, Łyda & Jackiewicz (2012) found that trainee interpreters showed in-group loyalty in mitigating source text praise and criticism directed at the group to which the interpreters belonged.

Seeber's and Zelger's (2007) conclusion that interpreters do not serve as holders of information echoes the position of the European Parliament, displayed in the disclaimer on its multimedia archive website. Although the official position of the Parliament is that the "interpretation does not constitute an authentic record

of proceedings" and that "only the original speech or the revised written translation of that speech is authentic",[2] the interpreting performed during plenary sessions must be recognised as part of the political debate in a broad sense. It is those interpretations that other MEPs react to during sittings, those that are made publicly available to European voters, and those which may be relayed further by the mass media, as pointed out by Bartłomiejczyk (2020: 9–10) in her analysis of mitigated racist language in the European Parliament.

3. Interpreting as discourse co-construction: Mitigation of radical political discourses

Building up on the initial explorations of the issue, a number of studies have continued to question the traditional model of the interpreter by analysing authentic interpreted political discourses. Among the earliest of such studies were Beaton-Thome's (2007; 2013) papers on European Parliament debates, the first of which focused on self-referentiality and lexical repetition in speeches interpreted from German into English. The author described examples of foregrounding, backgrounding, and the repetition of key terms such as "the European Union", as well as the extension of metaphor strings in the interpreted target texts, which she interpreted as strengthening of EU institutional discursive hegemony by interpreters. In the latter of the two studies, Beaton-Thome (2013) analysed lexical choices made in interpretations of plenary debates on the Guantanamo Bay camp. Her analysis of the online negotiation of ideologically loaded terms by interpreters suggested a hybrid ideological positioning – interpreters appeared to balance between the views expressed in the source text, the context of the wider debate and their personal positions.

European Parliament plenary debates were also analysed by Bartłomiejczyk (2016) in her extensive study of face-threatening acts. She found a variety of strategies that interpreters employed when source texts posed a threat to the recipients' face, with mitigation as the most common reaction to ST impoliteness. In two later case studies, Bartłomiejczyk (2020; 2021) focused specifically on racist and Eurosceptic discourses. In both, various approaches were observed when ideologically loaded language was interpreted, ranging from mitigation of the ST sentiment, through its preservation, to strengthening. Mitigation via the omission of discriminatory terms, euphemisation and addition of hedges appears to be the most common approach among EU interpreters. While the degree to which such strategies are employed by interpreters deliberately is near impossible to determine when analysing records of authentic data, the resulting target texts may be noticeably altered in terms of their ideological load.

---

2   https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/

Outside of the European Parliament, Gu and Tipton (2020) analysed press conferences of Chinese Premiers interpreted into English and found evidence of ideological intensification between ST and TT through increased self-referentiality. These results, which stand in opposition to those of Bartłomiejczyk's studies but share similarities with Beaton-Thome's (2007), may be strengthened by the specificity of the Chinese context, where government interpreters "are usually communist party members and are recruited into China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (Gu & Tipton 2020: 406). This appears to be further supported by Gao's (2021) analysis of interpreting at the 2016 "Summer Davos", where Chinese interpreters engaged in an overt mitigation of anti-Chinese statements by foreign speakers, and the intensification of the pro-Chinese ones.

Taken together, the findings of these studies underline the extent to which interpreters may co-construct discourses, the complexity of ideological processes that take place during interpreting and the critical role of the interpreter as an agent in mediated political discourse. The picture of the interpreter that emerges here is far from the "clear conduit" of traditional models, a position that is not without consequence in the area of politics. The following sections describe the collection of data and methods of their analysis to answer the question whether ideological shifts can be observed between ideologically loaded nominations and predications in English ST speeches and Polish TT speeches across the political spectrum, and whether there is a correlation between the shift and the ideological orientation of the ST speaker.

4. Dataset description and selection criteria

The parallel dataset analysed in this study comprises 49 plenary debate interventions in English and their 49 interpretations into Polish. The speeches and interpretations amount to a total of 19,512 words, or 146 minutes and 5 seconds, of analysed speech: 11,320 words, or 72 minutes and 48 seconds, of source text speech in English, and 8,192 words, or 73 minutes and 17 seconds, of target text speech in Polish. Earlier studies of ideological shift in simultaneously interpreted political discourse involved datasets of oftentimes underspecified sizes: 74 minutes of interpreted contributions from 21 MEPs (Beaton-Thome 2007); unspecified volume of contributions and interpretations in two languages sourced from a single debate (Beaton-Thome 2013); unspecified volume of text from one speaker across three years (Beaton-Thome 2020); around 21,000 words of ST and unknown number of words of corresponding TT sourced from contributions of a single speaker over four years (Bartłomiejczyk 2020; 2021). While the datasets analysed in the earlier studies and in the present study are noticeably smaller than the EPIC and related corpora of interpreted European Parliament discourse (Monti et al. 2005; Russo et al. 2012), they are all purpose-

built in order to focus on specific linguistic phenomena (ideologically salient language) and time-sensitive discursive phenomena (e.g., Euroscepticism, contested discursive labels, far-right discourse), which considerably limits the possible volume of the datasets.

The speeches and their interpretations were obtained from the publicly available European Parliament multimedia archives as video files and transcribed by the author. The source text transcripts were based on the verbatim reports published in the archives while the target texts were transcribed directly from the video files. Transcription markers were only applied for phenomena which are of interest to this study as potential markers of interpreting problems, e.g., pauses and their duration, silent and voiced hesitations, false starts, self-corrections. The interpretations had been performed and recorded at the time of the plenary sittings and are the actual interpretations that were available to MEPs participating in the debates. Although the European Parliament multimedia archive does not supply any information about the interpreters providing their services during the published debates, they are understood to be experienced professionals who have undergone a demanding accreditation process and whose performance is periodically assessed (Duflou 2016).

The dataset includes 19 speeches that have been identified as delivered impromptu by the speakers, 26 identified as read out, and 4 best described as half-read (cf. Defrancq, Plevoets & Magnifico 2015: 201 on rarity of impromptu speeches in the European Parliament). Reading out a prepared text is considered to be one of the primary sources of problem triggers for interpreters due to the greater information density, grammatical and lexical complexity, and, especially, the faster rate of delivery in comparison to impromptu speeches (Gile 2009: 192–193; Seeber 2017). While the average speech rate of 156.86 words per minute (wpm) in the dataset is above the threshold of 100–120 wpm historically cited as "comfortable" for simultaneous interpreting, it is within the boundaries of 150–160 wpm that recent studies have found to be the moderately challenging norm for interpreters in international organisations (cf. Seeber 2017: 78–80 for an overview of previous studies). The ST speech rate in the dataset should therefore not be considered as a major problem trigger for experienced interpreters.

The debates which could serve as potential sources of speeches to be analysed were selected on the basis of thematic criteria – all of them represented broad macro-topics (cf. Reisigl & Wodak 2009; Krzyżanowski 2018) characteristic of populist far-right discourse: migration, rule of law, and EU – Member State relations. The choice of topics was dictated by the high probability of MEPs across the political spectrum using ideologically loaded lexis when referring to key social actors and phenomena related to these topics. To ensure discursive relevance of the analysed speeches at the time of the compilation of the dataset, the speeches were sourced from the 2014–2019 European Parliament term.

The topics of all plenary debates in this term, as listed in the European Parliament multimedia archives, were examined to select debates within the macro-topics listed above. 384 such debates were identified, which was confirmed by a cursory reading of English-language speeches within the pre-selected debates. Debates with no contributions in English were discarded. The final selection of 49 speeches from 25 debates followed the principles of avoiding the repetition of speakers to avoid an undue influence of individuals' speaking style on the results of the analysis, as well as including a comparable number of native and non-native speakers. 23 of the speeches were delivered by native English speakers and 26 by non-native speakers of English.[3]

Crucially, a comparable number of speeches was selected for inclusion in the dataset from each political group active in the European Parliament during the 2014–2019 term (Table 1). This reflects the typical procedure in EP plenary debates, where a representative of each political group takes the floor at the beginning of every debate. Although the placement of European Parliament political groups on a left-right spectrum has been noted as challenging due to their internal heterogeneity and dynamicity (McElroy & Benoit 2012: 151), studies of roll call votes (Hix & Noury 2009; Cherepnalkoski et al. 2016) as well as expert surveys of groups' policy positions (McElroy & Benoit 2012; Lo, Proksch & Gschwend 2014; Lefkofridi & Katsanidou 2018) have indicated a clear ideological positioning of the groups on the left-right spectrum, as well as their high internal coherence. Table 1 reflects the typical left-right placement of political groups in the 2014–2019 European Parliament.

Table 1. Source texts and target texts in the analysed dataset. Political groups ordered from furthest left through centre to furthest right on the political spectrum.

Political group	Number of contributions	ST duration (min:sec)	ST number of words	TT duration (min:sec)	TT number of words	ST and TT duration (min:sec)	ST and TT number of words
GUE/NGL	7	8:15	1,227	8:17	934	16:32	2,161
Verts/ALE	7	10:56	1,711	10:57	1,178	21:53	2,889

---

[3] The status of native or non-native speaker of English was assigned based on the official languages of the speaker's country of origin. While each of the non-native speeches was delivered by a different MEP, the native English speeches include two contributions from one speaker, for a total of 48 speakers.

S&D	6	8:38	1,363	8:45	960	17:23	2,323
ALDE	7	11:40	1,810	11:44	1,320	23:24	3,130
EPP	7	10:39	1,659	10:40	1,189	21:19	2,848
ECR	6	9:09	1,380	9:09	1,051	18:18	2,431
EFDD	7	11:33	1,833	11:45	1,351	23:18	3,184
ENF	2	1:58	337	2:00	209	3:58	546
Total	49	72:48	11,320	73:17	8,192	146:05	19,512

At least one contribution from each of the major groups on each macro-topic was included, thus allowing an analysis of ideologically loaded language typical of debates on these topics across the political spectrum. Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), the smallest political group in the analysed timeframe, with few English speakers, is underrepresented in the dataset. The two ENF speeches represent two of three of the macro-topics of interest: migration and EU – Member State relations. However, as a group affiliating the far-right, Eurosceptic, and right-wing populist parties, ENF should be regarded as ideologically aligned with the larger Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) group (Kantola & Miller 2021: 785). In further analysis, the contributions by members of ENF are therefore taken together with those of EFDD MEPs.

Non-Inscrits (NI) in the European Parliament, MEPs unattached to any of the political groups, have been excluded from the analysis. As a small, informal group whose composition fluctuated throughout the parliamentary term, NI are ideologically incohesive (Cherepnalkoski et al. 2016: 13) – their contributions to plenary debates may be more suitable for case studies of individual MEPs. NI have also been shown to have the highest rates of non-attendance and voting abstention (Cherepnalkoski et al. 2016: 25), and so may be considered as having less impact on the overall proceedings of plenary debates than MEPs attached to political groups.

5. Methodology and data coding

Within the heterogeneous discipline of Critical Discourse Studies, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) has been successfully employed in analyses of political discourse. Its principles stem from the understanding of discourse as "text in context" which is both socially constituted and constitutive – it both shapes and is shaped by social practices (Reisigl 2018: 51). The primary focus of DHA analysis

are discursive strategies and their linguistic realisations in texts – ways of self- and other-presentation and argument-building "adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal" (Reisigl & Wodak 2009: 94). As such, the use of language by text producers is seen within DHA as intrinsically ideological. This study takes as its focal point the strategies of nomination and predication of social actors and phenomena that are central to the selected discourse macro-topics. Nominations and predications, as parts of "a more or less intentional plan of [discursive] practices" (Reisigl & Wodak 2009: 94), carry a salient ideological load – they express the underlying positioning of the text producer towards the social actor that they refer to. As two of the major loci of ideology in language, they have been examined over the last 30 years in studies of various social issues such as the racist treatment of migrants, the construction of national identities, or European integration (see Reisigl 2018 for historical overview).

Nomination indicates how social actors, objects, events, and processes are referred to linguistically – the realisations of this strategy usually take the form of noun phrases. The European Union, as a central actor in the dataset analysed here, may be referred to as "the EU", "our shared space", or "your already failed project".[4] Predication indicates the characteristics assigned to social actors, objects, events, and processes – in this study, verb phrases are analysed as linguistic realisations of this strategy. The European Union may be assigned such predications as "it has to use the means available", "it is founded on human rights, civil liberties and freedoms", or "it is not going to solve this issue".

While DHA was not explicitly designed for comparative analyses of translated or interpreted texts, the basic principles of discourse-analytical approaches render them suitable for such purposes, as evidenced by the studies reported on in section 3 above. This extends to the analysis of two other discursive strategies, mitigation and intensification, or the modification of the illocutionary force of texts (Reisigl 2018: 52). Originally these strategies were analysed within-text; I analysed their execution between (versions of) texts – the source text and target text in an interpreted debate. The use of a parallel English – Polish dataset, allows for a comprehensive, systematic analysis not only of the ideological load of the ST and TT nominations and predications, but also of the possible ideological shift between them caused by mitigation and intensification.

This analysis follows a top-down approach, wherein an initial exploration of the dataset, informed by existing research of populist far-right discourse, led to the establishment of 13 categories of analysis. They reflect the key social actors and phenomena in populist far-right discourse topics: nominations (n_) and predications (p_) of the European Union (EU), EU policies (EUpol), European

---

4   All examples are taken from the dataset analysed in the present paper. Square brackets indicate the author's literal translation.

citizens (EUcit), Member States of the EU (MS), Members of the European Parliament (MEP) and migrants, as well as nominations of migration. Initially, the category p_migration was also included; however, only one linguistic realisation of this category was found in the entirety of the dataset. It was therefore excluded from the analysis.

Having established the 13 categories, the ST part of the parallel dataset was analysed for their linguistic realisations. A total of 1,054 tokens (linguistic realisations) were identified, 688 nominations and 366 predications. The TT part of the dataset was then analysed for interpreted equivalents of the ST tokens. The comparative analysis of their ideological loads indicates whether the ideological load of a token is maintained (the ST ideological load is realised without any ideological shift in the TT), mitigated (the ST ideological load is weakened or removed in the TT) or intensified (the ST ideological load is made more prominent or introduced in the TT). In practical terms, all three results may emerge from a variety of linguistic processes. A comprehensive overview of typical neutral, mitigated and intensified TT realisations may be found in Bartłomiejczyk's (2016) study of facework, later adopted to ideological shift (2021).

When deciding whether a token had been realised neutrally, mitigated or intensified, all tokens were analysed in the context of the speaker's entire contribution to the debate, the intertextual and institutional context of the given plenary debate, as well as the broader socio-political context (cf. Reisigl 2018: 53), with the starting point being the analysis of the linguistic expression itself, whose meaning and potential ideological implications are then situated in these broader contexts. This is especially important in the case of omissions and additions. The analysis of ideological shifts in the present paper takes as its primary focus the language of political speeches and their interpretations, not non-verbal performance aspects of either the ST or the TT. While modulation of pitch, volume or speech tempo may mitigate or intensify the rhetorical impact of a text (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 83–84), the interpretation of phenomena such as extended pauses or false-starts in the TT is limited in this study to their role as indicators of TT production difficulties (Gile 2009: 163). In the examples analysed in the following sections, the ST transcript and TT transcript are followed by the author's literal back-translation of the TT into English in square brackets. The central analysed token is underlined. Phenomena such as pauses and hesitations are marked with angle brackets.

5.1. Qualitative analysis: Neutral TT renditions

In example (1) of a neutral TT rendition, the interpreter produces a close translation of the ST nomination of Member States. The ST speaker reads out a list of perceived faults of the EU counter-terrorism framework; the fragment

quoted below comes at the end of this list. As indicated by the 3-second pause and the false start before producing the names of countries given by the ST speaker, the interpreter appears to be struggling with the relatively rapidly delivered list of arguments. After the pause, the interpreter does reproduce the names accurately, and so does not alter the salience of this nomination.

(1) **n_MS ST** "lack of properly monitoring and defending EU external borders, especially not including countries like <u>Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia,</u> which defend the external borders, mainly, of the European Union"
n_MS TT "brak właściwego monitorowania i ochrony granic unijnych, szczególnie <pause 3s> nie, nie mówiąc o tych państwach takich jak <u>Rumunia, Bułgaria czy Chorwacja</u>, które bronią granic zewnętrznych Unii"
[lack of proper monitoring and protection of Union borders, especially [pause 3s] not, not to mention those countries like <u>Romania, Bulgaria or Croatia</u>, which mainly defend the external borders of the Union]

Similarly, in example (2), the TT realisation of a Member State predication is neutral. The fragment below sees a Eurosceptic MEP criticising the proposed border control regulation system by claiming that biometric data collected from EU citizens could be mishandled by the EU. Using strongly negative language, he refers to unspecified Member States as being corrupt and unworthy of EU citizens' trust. The rhetorical force and ideological load of modifiers used by him in the underlined passage is maintained in the TT.

(2) **p_MS ST** "the biometric data can be accessed by all EU countries, as well as those crime agencies. Now some of those countries <u>are deeply and institutionally corrupt and untrustworthy</u>. and the EU has been building its legal institutions and crime agencies for some years"
p_MS TT "dane biometryczne będą mogły być wykorzystane przez wszystkie kraje unijne i ich organy ścigania, niektóre z tych krajów <u>są głęboko, instytucjonalnie skorumpowane i niewiarygodne</u>. I Unia Europejska buduje swoje instytucje prawne i organy ścigania od kilku lat"
[the biometric data will be able to be used by all union countries and their law enforcement agencies, some of those countries <u>are deeply, institutionally corrupt and untrustworthy</u>. And the European Union has been building its legal institutions and law enforcement agencies for some years]

5.2. Qualitative analysis: Mitigated TT renditions

In example (3) below, two mitigations may be observed in one short fragment of text. The speaker, a populist far-right MEP, took the floor during a debate on radical right-wing violence in Europe but referred also to violent actions of far-left groups, while pointing to the EU as the cause of all extremist violence in Europe. In the quoted fragment, the speaker stated that parties like his own UKIP had warned European institutions about the consequences of migration from third countries into the EU. He refers to incoming migrants using a hyperbolic phrase which appears to have the aims of inflating the scale of the issue being discussed and the associated threats, thus strengthening the speaker's negative evaluation of migrants. In the TT, the negative modifier "unlimited number of" is omitted, thus mitigating the ideological load of the phrase, and of the larger text. Omission has been widely described as a typical coping tactic employed in interpreting (Jones 2002: 102; Gile 2009: 210). Under the intense cognitive load that accompanies the process of interpreting, fragments of the source text may remain unrealised in the target text. The first in line for omission will be those elements which could be considered as (merely) "illustrative or in some other way accessory" (Jones 2002: 102) for the communication of the primary ST argument: modifiers, adjectives, adverbs, repetition – potential signifiers of ideological load, as is the case in this example.

Another mitigation in this fragment concerns the nomination of EU citizens which is semantically generalised in the TT, with the result being a removal of positive characterisation assigned in the ST. The speaker makes reference to the possible competition between incoming migrants and "ordinary working people" for workplaces. This nomination of European citizens, characteristically for populist politicians, assigns positive characteristics to "the common people" and pits them against "the other" (Mudde 2017: 4). In the TT, however, the nomination is generalised to "the locals". Although the referents are the same as in the ST, they are stripped of the positive traits assigned by the original speaker.

    (3) **n_migrant; n_EUcit ST** "the EU has ignored so-called populist parties like UKIP, Five Star and the Swedish Democrats, and they leave the doors open to <u>unlimited numbers of people</u> competing for jobs with <u>ordinary working people</u>"

    n_migrant; n_Eucit TT "Unia ignoruje tak zwane partie populistyczne jak UKIP, Pięć Gwiazd, Szwedzcy Demokraci, i to były [sic] otwarta furtka do tego, że <u>ludzie</u> mogli konkurować o miejsca pracy z <u>miejscowymi</u>"

    [the Union has ignored so-called populist parties like UKIP, Five Star, Swedish Democrats and it were an open wicket gate for <u>people</u> being able to compete for workplaces with <u>the locals</u>]

Figurative language has been shown to be a significant problem trigger for interpreters. Studies of its use in the European Parliament show a tendency among interpreters of greater hesitation, hedging, and paraphrasing when encountering metaphorical expressions (Spinolo & Garwood 2010). This may result in the mitigation of ideologically salient language, as in example (4). The underlined nomination used during a debate on Brexit reveals the speaker's intensely negative opinion of the European Union. Through the use of a metaphorical expression, "your already failed project", the speaker is able to produce a rhetorically impactful statement. Although the source text is delivered at a pace that is average for the dataset, the interpreter appears to struggle with the production of the TT, pauses for 4 seconds and introduces hedging before producing a demetaphorised EU nomination – the formal name, "European Union". The resulting TT token is, therefore, mitigated in relation to the ST due to a total loss of the ideological load. The second underlined token follows immediately and is a predication of the European Union. The speaker states that the lack of a post-Brexit trade deal with the United Kingdom would be disastrous for the EU – it "will certainly go bankrupt". In the TT, the modifier "certainly" is omitted, while the modal verb is realised as "may". These two changes weaken the negative evaluation of the European Union and its actions – the ideological load of the token is visibly mitigated.

(4) **n_EU; p_EU ST** "therefore, Mr Juncker, back off and start working on a decent trade deal. A deal without trade, without trade with the UK, your already failed project will certainly go bankrupt"
n_EU; p_EU TT "trzeba popracować nad przyzwoitym porozumieniem handlowym. <pause 4s> no, bez handlu z Wielką Brytanią, Unia Europejska może zbankrutować.>"
[a decent trade agreement must be worked on <pause 4s> well, without trade with Great Britain, the European Union may go bankrupt.]

5.4. Qualitative analysis: Intensified TT renditions

Intensification, although less common in the analysed dataset than mitigation, can also be observed in a variety of linguistic phenomena. In example (5), a left-wing speaker's contribution to a debate on the rule of law in EU Member States is closely translated by the interpreter up to the underlined predication of EU citizens. The speaker attempts to position herself as a direct link between Europeans and the European Parliament by calling on other MEPs to act in cases of abuse of the rule of law. However, while the ST token assigns the verb "want" to Europeans, the interpreter uses "expect" in the TT token. The shift from a wish

to an expectation strengthens the rhetorical force of the predication and may be read as an ideological intensification of the token.

(5) **p_EUcit ST** "they're waving EU flags because they are addressing us, because rule of law and fundamental rights are under attack in many Member States in the European Union, they <u>want to see action from our side</u>"

p_EUcit TT "machają unijnymi flagami, bo zwracają się do nas, bo praworządność i prawa podstawowe są atakowane w wielu państwach członkowskich Unii Europejskiej. Ludzie <u>oczekują od nas działania</u>"

[they're waving union flags because they are addressing us, because the rule of law and fundamental rights are being attacked in many Member States of the European Union. People <u>expect action from us</u>]

While the EU nomination in example (4) was an instance of ideological mitigation through demetaphorisation, the nominations of migration and migrants in example (6) show how tokens may be ideologically intensified by interpreters' use of figurative language. Below is a fragment of a speech delivered during a debate on EU asylum policy. The first of the underlined nominations, "a free-for-all", is a conventional metaphorical expression which originated in sports – the speaker indicates that migration into the EU under current rules is a chaotic, negative phenomenon and requires stricter control. In the TT realisation of this nomination, the metaphorical target domain is changed from SPORTS to MENTAL HEALTH – the word "madness" assigns to migration more strongly negative characteristics than in the ST and intensifies the anti-migration sentiment of the token. In the second of the underlined tokens below, a metaphorical expression is introduced in the TT where there was none in the ST. In place of the ST nomination "huge amount of people" referring to migrants, the interpreter introduces "such an influx", a phrase employing the dehumanizing WATER metaphor which is among the most stereotypically used in negative representations of migrants in racist discourse (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 59). By strengthening the anti-migrant sentiment in the first token and introducing it in the second token, the overall ideological load of this fragment is intensified in the TT.[5]

---

[5] Few studies have explicitly explored how interpreters approach metaphorical and creative language (e.g., Viaggio 1996; Beaton-Thome 2007; Spinolo & Garwood 2010; Spinolo 2018). Since metaphor is a crucial tool in political discourse which "activates unconscious emotional associations" and helps politicians "tell the right story" (Charteris-Black 2011: 28), ideological shifts when interpreting metaphorical language carry a high potential of meaning alteration.

(6) **n_migration; n_migrant ST** "because right now, it's <u>a free-for-all</u>, and all that's happening is that countries that have opened up their borders, like Germany, have realised that they can't cope with this <u>huge amount of people</u>, and are now trying to force these people onto other nations, like Hungary and Poland"

n_migration; n_migrant TT "ponieważ jak na razie, teraz, jest to <u>szaleństwo</u>. I co się dzieje? Kraje, które otworzyły swoje granice, jak Niemcy, nagle zorientowały się, że nie są w stanie sobie poradzić z <u>takim napływem</u>, i teraz chcą zmusić do tego inne kraje, takie jak Węgry i Polskę"

[because for now, currently, it is <u>madness.</u> And what is happening? Countries that have opened up their borders, like Germany, have suddenly realised that they are unable to cope with <u>such an influx</u>, and now they want to force other countries to do it, like Hungary and Poland]

The examples analysed in this section present a variety of linguistic realisations of maintained, mitigated, and intensified ideological loads between the ST and TT tokens. An analysis of authentic texts separated from their producers cannot lead to conclusions about the motivations for ideological shifts with any degree of certainty. However, be they the result of interpreters' coping tactics or more deliberate TT alterations, they carry a discursive potential of altering the text recipient's perception of the text's ideological load.

5.4. Quantitative analysis: Nominations and predications

In total, 1,054 tokens, 688 nominations and 366 predications, were subjected to qualitative analysis (Table 2). A majority of all ST tokens (558, 52.94%) underwent an ideological shift in the TT, with mitigation (425, 40.32%) being more common than intensification (133, 12.62%). A chi-square test of independence showed a significant association between the type of token (nomination or predication) and the TT realisation, $X^2 = 35.483$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$. When only nomination tokens are analysed, positive correlation is observed with the neutral realisation, with 369 neutral tokens (53.63%), and 319 shifted tokens: 248 mitigated (36.04%) and 71 intensified (10.32%). This general tendency in interpreted nominations stands in contrast to the TT realisations of predications. Positive correlation is observed with mitigation (177, 48.36%) and intensification (62, 16.94%), while the correlation with neutral realisation (127, 34.70%) is negative. The result for predication tokens appears to align with those of previous studies of European Parliament discourse, indicating a tilt towards mitigation in target texts.

Table 2. TT realisations of all tokens.

| | Shift | | | |
	Neutral	Mitigated	Intensified	Total
Nomination	369	248	71	688
Predication	127	177	62	366
Total	496	425	133	1,054

5.5. Quantitative analysis: Far-right, centrist and far-left source texts

As indicated in section 4, the character of European Parliament political groups may complicate their assignment on a left-right political spectrum (see also Mudde 2019 on spreading of far-right national political parties over the EFDD, ENF, ECR and EPP political groups). To allow for a left-centre-right comparison of TT realisations (Table 3), the most radically left-wing (GUE/NGL) and right-wing (EFDD and ENF) political groups (McElroy & Benoit 2012: 156; Kantola & Miller 2021: 785) were selected for inclusion here. While establishing a political centre in the European Parliament is similarly challenging, the political group ALDE is taken to be the most typically liberal-centrist of the groups included in the analysed dataset (McElroy & Benoit 2012: 156; Lo, Proksch & Gschwend 2014: 216).

Table 3. TT realisations of far-left, centrist and far-right tokens.

| | Shift | | | |
	Neutral	Mitigated	Intensified	Total
Far left (GUE/NGL)	61	67	16	144
Centre (ALDE)	62	41	13	116
Far right (EFDD and ENF)	105	97	43	245
Total	228	205	72	505

Compared with the results for all 1,054 tokens (Table 2), far-right tokens appear to be interpreted less neutrally: 140, 57.14%, were ideologically shifted, against 558, 52.94% for all tokens. When far-right tokens were shifted, mitigation remained the more common realisation, as was the case with the results for all tokens, but the percentage of intensified tokens was higher in comparison (43, 17.55% for far-right tokens; 133, 12.62% for all tokens). In the case of far-

left tokens, the results show them to be ideologically shifted similarly frequently to the far-right tokens (83, 57.64%), with mitigation again the more common realisation. While the far-left and the far-right were similar in the distribution of neutral and ideologically shifted TT tokens, the centre appears to diverge. 46.55% of the centrist tokens, 54 tokens, were ideologically shifted in the TT dataset – less than in the case of either the far-left or the far-right tokens, and less than the 52.94% of ideologically shifted TT tokens in the entire analysed dataset. However, a chi-square test of independence showed that these associations of ideological orientation and TT realisation are not statistically significant, $X^2 = 8.0206$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.0908$.

6. Discussion of the results and conclusion

This paper aimed to answer two research questions: whether ideological shifts are present between the ideologically salient nomination and predication tokens in the source text and target text datasets, and whether there is a correlation between the ideological shift and the ideological orientation of the source text speaker. The analysis of a parallel English – Polish dataset of European Parliament plenary debate speeches from across the political spectrum, grounded in the Discourse-Historical Approach and with a focus on references to key social actors and phenomena of contested populist far-right discourse topics, reveals intriguing patterns of ideological shifts. Such an approach to word- and phrase-level shifts in multilingual political discourse, although labour-intensive and time-consuming, affords the researcher an insight into semantic processes embedded in multiple levels of context that automated analyses would likely be unable to capture. Additionally, the inclusion of Interpreting Studies paradigms in the analytical framework enriches the analysis with insights based not solely on ideological processes, but also on the specificity of the task performed by interpreters – something that has arguably not been sufficiently accounted for in previous CDS studies of interpreted political discourse.

The qualitative analysis revealed a range of target text realisations of ideologically loaded language: neutral renditions, mitigation and intensification of source text nominations and predications, thus granting further support to the possible impact of linguistic phenomena observed by Bartłomiejczyk (2016; 2020; 2021). As in her studies, mitigation emerges as the more common type of ideological shift, stemming from such TT processes as partial or total omission of a token, choice of less ideologically salient lexis, demetaphorisation or change of metaphorical domains.

Although ideological intensification on the scale observed in Gu and Tipton's (2020) or Gao's (2021) studies was not expected due to the considerable differences in the interpreting context and interpreters' positioning within it,

a number of tokens were ideologically intensified in the TT dataset, caused by such changes between the ST and the TT as choice of more ideologically salient verbs, metaphorization or change of metaphorical domains.

Ideological shifts between source text and target text observed in a critical discourse study such as this should not be impulsively understood as intentional ideological work by interpreters. Factors specific to simultaneous interpreting, such as the near-unavoidable errors and constant high cognitive effort required for the task, render such a conclusion untenable. The results should, however, be evaluated for the meaning potential that a large volume of ideological shifts could carry with regards to the target text audience.

In the quantitative part of the analysis, a comparison of TT realisations of nominations and predications demonstrates that the former were rendered neutrally more often than the latter. The immediate explanation of this result appears to be that the interpretation of nominations posed a lesser challenge to the interpreters. A considerable portion of the nominations were proper names: names of Member States, various references to the European Union and its institutions. Although proper names are typically listed among problem triggers for interpreters (e.g., Gile 2009: 171), the proper names used in European Parliament debates are often repetitive, well known to the EP interpreters and available in supplementary documents. Be they names of countries, of pieces of legislation, or of Members of Parliament, interpreters are likely to encounter them repeatedly throughout their work, allowing for accurate, and neutral, interpretation.

In contrast to nominations, predications were ideologically shifted more often. This statistically significant result can be attributed to their relative interpreting difficulty. Where the nominations were typical, familiar to the interpreter from experience and available in working documents, the predications (verb phrases) were necessarily more unique, unexpected and creative – therefore more difficult to interpret. The increased difficulty was accompanied by a higher likelihood of interpreters resorting to coping tactics such as omissions and generalisations, resulting in the ideological load of predications being shifted in the target text. The large number of ideologically shifted tokens is especially striking considering that the interpreters whose output was analysed are experienced professionals.

Although no statistically significant relation between TT rendition and ST ideological orientation was found in this study, the numerical trends evident in the analysed data suggest that the issue should be explored further using larger samples of data from various political groups. When TT renditions of far-left, centrist and far-right tokens were compared, the proportions of neutrally realised and ideologically shifted tokens were remarkably similar for the groups on either end of the ideological spectrum, while proportionally more of the centrist tokens were realised neutrally. The higher proportion of ideologically shifted left- and

right-wing tokens may be explained by the salience of the ST ideological load. The political centre, as the nominally balanced option expressing measured views, appears to employ language that is less emotive or figurative, and therefore less difficult to interpret and less susceptible to ideological shifts. Far-left and far-right discourse appears to be more highly ideologically loaded, more creative, more figurative, more linguistically complex, more surprising for the interpreter – and therefore more prone to being ideologically shifted.

The results of this study demonstrate that ideological shifts due to interpreting are common across the political spectrum, regardless of the ideological orientation of the ST speaker. The findings are, however, limited by the relatively small size of the analysed dataset. Considering the wide range of contexts and linguistic means through which ideological shifts in interpreted political discourse occur, it is nonetheless safe to conclude that the role of interpreting in the co-construction of discourses is worthy of further study.

As Duflou (2016: 121) rightly points out, in the age of online streaming, the audience of EP plenaries has grown from the (often largely empty) rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg to potentially much larger audiences online. Interpreting at the EP has itself shifted from being "for the moment" to "for the ages" – of which both MEPs and interpreters must be acutely aware. After systematic, polished written translation of plenary debates was stopped by the European Parliament in 2012, the recordings of interpretations archived online have become the sole means of accessing parliamentary proceedings by international audiences. This has further increased the potential broader impact of ideological shifts in interpreting, as the formerly ephemeral interpretations may now easily be accessed, dissected and reported on in the mass media.

REFERENCES

Angelelli, Claudia V. 2004. *Revisiting the interpreter's role. A study of conference, court, and medical interpreters in Canada, Mexico, and the United States*. Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.55

Bartłomiejczyk, Magdalena. 2016. *Face threats in interpreting: A pragmatic study of plenary debates in the European Parliament*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

Bartłomiejczyk, Magdalena. 2020. How much noise can you make through an interpreter? A case study on racist discourse in the European Parliament. *Interpreting* 22(2). 238–261. DOI: 10.1075/intp.00042.bar

Bartłomiejczyk, Magdalena. 2021. Interpreting nonmainstream ideology (Euroscepticism) in the European Parliament. *Perspectives* 30(4). 678–694. DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2021.1939740

Beaton, Morven. 2007. Interpreted ideologies in institutional discourse: The case of the European Parliament. *The Translator* 13(2), 271–296. DOI: 10.1080/13556509.2007.10799241

Beaton-Thome, Morven. 2013. What's in a word? Your *enemy combatant* is my *refugee*: The role of simultaneous interpreters in negotiating the lexis of Guantánamo in the European Parliament. *Journal of Language and Politics* 12(3). 378–399. DOI: 10.1075/jlp.12.3.04bea

Beaton-Thome, Morven. 2020. Flagging the homeland: Interpreting Brexit à la Nigel Farage in the European Union. In Katerina Strani (ed.), *Multilingualism and politics: Revisiting multilingual citizenship*, Palgrave Macmillan. 105–128.

Charteris-Black, Jonathan. 2011. *Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor*. (2nd ed.) Palgrave Macmillan.

Cherepnalkoski, Darko, Andreas Karpf, Igor Mozetič & Miha Grčar. 2016. Cohesion and coalition formation in the European Parliament: Roll-call votes and Twitter activities. *PLoS ONE* 11(11): e0166586. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0166586

Defrancq, Bart, Koen Plevoets & Cédric Magnifico. 2015. Connective items in interpreting and translation: Where do they come from? In J. Romero-Trillo (Ed.), *Yearbook of Corpus Linguistics and Pragmatics 2015: Current approaches to discourse and translation studies*, Springer. 195–222. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-17948-3_9

Dijk, Teun A., van. 2018. Socio-cognitive discourse studies. In John Flowerdew & John E. Richardson (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies*, Routledge. 26–43.

Diriker, Ebru. 2004. *De-/re-contextualizing conference interpreting: Interpreters in the Ivory Tower?* Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.53

Diriker, Ebru. 2011. Agency in conference interpreting: Still a myth? *Gramma* 19. 27–36. DOI: 10.26262/gramma.v19i0.6321

Duflou, Veerle. 2016. *Be(com)ing a conference interpreter*. Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.124

Gao, Fei. 2021. Making sense of nationalism manifested in interpreted texts at 'Summer Davos' in China. *Critical Discourse Studies* 18(6). 688–704. DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2020.1834420

Gile, Daniel. 2009. *Basic concepts and models for interpreter and translator training*. Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.8

Gu, Chonglong & Rebecca Tipton. 2020. (Re-)voicing Beijing's discourse through self-referentiality: A corpusbased CDA analysis of government interpreters' discursive mediation at China's political press conferences (1998–2017). *Perspectives* 28(3). 406–423. DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2020.1717558

Hix, Simon & Abdul Noury. 2009. After enlargement: Voting patterns in the Sixth European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(2). 159–174.

Jones, Roderick. 2002. *Conference interpreting explained*. St. Jerome.

Kantola, Johanna & Cherry Miller. 2021. Party politics and radical right populism in the European Parliament: Analysing political groups as democratic actors. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 59(4). 782–801. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.13181

Krzyżanowski, Michał. 2018. Social media in/and the politics of the European Union: Politico-organizational communication, institutional cultures and self-inflicted elitism. *Journal of Language and Politics* 17(2). 281–304. DOI: jlp.18001.krz

Lefkofridi, Zoe & Alexia Katsanidou. 2018. A step closer to a transnational party system? Competition and coherence in the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament: A transnational party system? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(6). 1462–1482. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12755

Lo, James, Sven-Oliver Proksch & Thomas Gschwend. 2014. A common left-right scale for voters and parties in Europe. *Political Analysis* 22(2). 205–223. DOI: 10.1093/pan/mpt028

McElroy, Gail & Kenneth Benoit. 2012. Policy positioning in the European Parliament. *European Union Politics* 13(1). 150–167. DOI: 10.1177/1465116511416680

Monacelli, Claudia. 2009. *Self-preservation in simultaneous interpreting: Surviving the role*. Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.84

Monti, Cristina, Claudio Bendazzoli, Annalisa Sandrelli & Mariachiara Russo. 2005. Studying directionality in simultaneous interpreting through an electronic corpus: EPIC (European Parliament Interpreting Corpus). *Meta* 50(4). DOI: 10.7202/019850ar

Mudde, Cas. 2017. Introduction to the populist radical right. In Cas Mudde (ed.), *The populist radical right: A reader*, Routledge. 1–10.

Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The far right today*. Polity.

Pöchhacker, Franz. 2004. *Introducing interpreting studies*. Routledge.

Reisigl, Martin. 2018. The Discourse-Historical Approach. In John Flowerdew & John E. Richardson (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies*, Routledge. 44–59.

Reisigl, Martin & Ruth Wodak. 2001. *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism*. Routledge.

Reisigl, Martin & Ruth Wodak. 2009. The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Sage. 87–121.

Russo, Mariachiara, Claudio Bendazzoli, Annalisa Sandrelli & Nicoletta Spinolo. 2012. The European Parliament Interpreting Corpus (EPIC): Implementation and developments. In Francesco Straniero Sergio & Caterina Falbo (eds.), *Breaking ground in corpus-based interpreting studies*, Peter Lang. 53–90.

Schäffner, Christina & Susan Bassnett. 2010. Introduction. Politics, media and translation: Exploring synergies. In Christina Schäffner & Susan Bassnett (eds.), *Political discourse, media and translation*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 1–22.

Seeber, Kilian G. 2017. Interpreting at the European institutions: Faster, higher, stronger. *CLINA* 3(2). 73–90. DOI: 10.14201/clina2017327390

Seeber, Kilian G. & Christian Zelger. 2007. Betrayal – vice or virtue? An ethical perspective on accuracy in simultaneous interpreting. *Meta* 52(2). 290–298. DOI: 10.7202/016071ar

Setton, Robin & Andrew Dawrant. 2016. *Conference interpreting – A complete course*. Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/btl.120

Spinolo, Nicoletta. 2018. Studying figurative language in simultaneous interpreting: The IMITES (*Interpretación de la Metáfora Entre ITaliano y ESpañol*) Corpus. In Mariachiara Russo, Claudio Bendazzoli & Bart Defrancq (eds.), *Making way in corpus-based interpreting studies*, Springer. 133–155. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-10-6199-8_8

Spinolo, Nicoletta & Christopher J. Garwood. 2010. To kill or not to kill: Metaphors in simultaneous interpreting. *Forum* 8(1). 181–211. DOI: 10.1075/forum.8.1.08spi

Viaggio, Sergio. 1996. The pitfalls of metalingual use in simultaneous interpreting. *The Translator* 2(2). 179–198. DOI: 10.1080/13556509.1996.10798973

Warchał, Krystyna, Andrzej Łyda & Alina Jackiewicz. 2012. Whose face? Us and them in English – Polish consecutive interpreting. *Meta* 56(4). 775–795. DOI: 10.7202/1011252ar