THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOTAL MI SCORE AND CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING PERFORMANCE IN IRANIAN MALE AND FEMALE TRAINEE INTERPRETERS

INTRODUCTION

Pöchhacker (2004) believes interpreting is a kind of translating in which an interpreter produces a first and final rendition of a speech in another language. According to Mahmoodzadeh (1992), interpreting consists of presenting the closest possible meaning of what is said in the source language in the target language. It can be done simultaneously or consecutively and preserving the tone of the source language speaker. Gile (2001), on the other hand, defines it as rewording the full content of the source speech, not producing a report, a summary, or comments on the source speech.

THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES (MI)

One of the theories that focus on personality differences is the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) proposed by Howard Gardner (1983). Gardner began the work on multiple intelligences in the 1980s, and the research continues after that. Here are Gardner’s eight broad categories or “intelligences” (GARDNER, 1983/2011, 77-217):

- **Linguistic Intelligence**: The capacity to use words effectively, whether orally (e.g., as a storyteller, orator, or politician) or in writing (e.g., as a poet, playwright, editor, or journalist).
- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence**: The capacity to use numbers effectively (e.g., as a mathematician, tax accountant, or statistician) and reason well (e.g., as a scientist, computer programmer, or logician).
- **Spatial Intelligence**: The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately (e.g., as a hunter, scout, or guide) and perform transformations upon those perceptions (e.g., as an interior decorator, architect, artist, or inventor).
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**: Expertise in using one’s whole body to express ideas and feelings (e.g., as an actor, mime, athlete, or dancer) and facility in using one’s hands to produce or transform things (e.g., as a craftsperson, sculptor, mechanic, or surgeon).
- **Musical Intelligence**: The capacity to perceive (e.g., as a music aficionado), discriminate (e.g., as a music critic), transform (e.g., as a composer), and express (e.g., as a performer) musical forms.
- **Interpersonal Intelligence**: The ability to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people.
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence**: Self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively based on that knowledge.
- **Naturalistic Intelligence**: The ability to quickly recognize and classify plants, animals, and other things in nature.
There is another category that Gardner has recently added to his previous categories. It is "existential intelligence" and is still being developed. The theory of multiple intelligences has proved useful for many educators. Several studies show the role of MI in language teaching and learning contexts. (RICHARDS & RODGERS, 2001; GARDNER, 2006; ARNOLD & FONSECA, 2004).

It supports what we all know to be true: A one-size-fits-all approach to education will inevitably leave some students behind. Many educators have had the experience of not reaching some students until they presented the information in a completely different way or provided new options for student expression. Research has also supported this idea. According to Hattie (2011), one way to improve the students' learning is to provide them with various ways to access the content. Suppose the teacher provides the students with numerous ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. In that case, it can lead to more engagement and learning and provides teachers with a more accurate understanding of students' knowledge and skills (DARLING-HAMMOND, 2010). As Tomlinson (2014) states, "instruction should be transferred as much as possible by detailed knowledge about students' specific strengths, needs, and areas for growth."

One way to find out the students' strengths and weaknesses is by measuring their level of MI. Research shows that people with different levels of MI are good at specific jobs. For example, a person with a high level of visual-spatial intelligence can be a good painter or a person with a high level of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can be a successful athlete, or a person with a high level of verbal-linguistic intelligence can be an excellent translator.

As interpreting is a complex activity requiring different skills, it seems reasonable to suppose a relationship between different levels of students' intelligence and interpretation performance. If the assumption is confirmed in the research, it can shed light on interpreter training. In other words, if different levels of MI are considered to be one of the required ingredients for a successful career in interpreting, the necessity of introducing it to academic courses and incorporating it in the training of interpreters will be demonstrated.

GENDER AND INTERPRETING

Gender difference is another issue dealt with in this study. By gender difference, we don't mean just physical differences between the two genders. Most relevant here is the difference in the mental processes. In almost all fields of study, there have been efforts to highlight the differences between males and females. Academic disciplines such as psychology, marketing, management, biology, medicine, education, etc., have plenty of research in this field. Gender studies have received considerable attention in language studies too. Brown (2007) proposed four theoretical positions for research on language and gender and mentioned the scholars who have explored a broad range of topics and issues related to this field (MCKAY, 2005; DAVIS & SKILTON-SYLVESTER, 2004; SUnderland, 2000; TANNEN, 1996, 1990; HOLMES, 1991, 1998; NILSEN et al., 1977; LAKOFF, 1975).

Recently, gender has also been the focus of some research in interpreting and translating studies. These are some of the scholars who have investigated this subject. (SIMON 1996; VON FLOTOW, 1997, 2001; CHAMBERLAIN, 1998; SANTAEMILIA, 2005; STRAUSS, 1998; STATE, 1994.) After the cultural turn in 1970, feminism has greatly impacted translation and interpreting studies (YANG, 2014). Feminists in western countries studied the relationship between translation/interpreting and gender. They tried to root out the traditional but incorrect (VON FLOTOW, 1997) that men are superior to women. At that time, feminists in most Asian countries tried to make women more visible in society and translate and interpret publicly in the mass media like in T.V. newscasts. Pöchhacker (2004) believes the essential difference between interpreting and translating is the immediacy of the former. When men and women have to cope with the time constraints of the interpreting setting, they use different strategies when asked to convert a text spoken in one language to a semantically equivalent text in a different language (SABET & RABEIE 2011; HILMIOĞLU 2015; YANG, 2014; CASTRO, 2013; MC DOUGALL, 2012; STOCKWELL, 2002; WODAK, 1997 & SIMON, 1996). So, this phenomenon that gender differences affect interpretation in different contexts and societies was necessary to be investigated so that policymakers take this important issue into account in training future interpreters in different academic settings.
The number of research in the field of gender and interpreting is not the same in CI (Consecutive Interpreting) compared to S.I. (Simultaneous Interpreting). Numerous studies point out the effect of gender in different aspects of S.I. The most recent ones are as follows. Collard & Defrancq (2017) performed a corpus-based study on sex differences in simultaneous interpreting. The results showed the superiority of women in some of the aspects of the study. Magnifico and Defrancq (2017) studied the role of gender in using hedges in conference interpreting; the results showed that women used hedges more than men. They also worked on norms and gender in SI (2020). Tajvidi and Ferdowsi (2018) studied the effect of E.Q. and gender on oral cloze performance of simultaneous interpreting students. The results showed no association between the students’ interpreting performance and their gender. Research on the role of gender in consecutive interpreting is scarce. We could only find a study by Yenkimaleki, Coen, and de Jong (2017), who studied the benefits of prosodic training in male and female interpreter trainees. They found out that there is a significant advantage for women over men in the participants’ performance.

Thus, by the valuable findings mentioned above, it is logical to assume a relationship between gender and the interpreter trainees’ consecutive performance. Since there are few systematic studies on the effect of gender on the consecutive interpreters’ performance, an experimental study should investigate the impact of gender on the interpreter trainees’ performance. According to the aspects mentioned above, this issue would pave the way for training future interpreters. Thus, this study investigates the effect of gender in consecutive interpreting performance by consecutive interpreter trainees in Iran so that the study results would shed light on the modification of curriculum in interpreting studies and training qualified interpreters as a result.

**Research questions and hypotheses**

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following research questions were attempted:

- **RQ1:** Is there a statistically significant relationship between interpreter trainees' total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance?
- **RQ2:** Is there a statistically significant relationship between male and female total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

- **H0 1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between interpreter trainees’ total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance.
- **H0 2:** There is no statistically significant relationship between male and female interpreter trainees’ total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance.

**METHODOLOGY**

According to Williams and Chesterman (2002), there are three types of research: empirical, conceptual, and experimental. As the present study is trying to find a relationship between the multiple intelligences and consecutive interpreting performance using the information collected through the MI questionnaire, it falls under empirical studies. In Williams and Chesterman’s typology, in collecting data, the one that involves the researcher’s intervention is categorized as “experimental”; otherwise, it is an “observational” one. As the researcher in this study remained an observer or analyzer, and there existed no treatment, this study may be categorized as an “observational” (descriptive/natural) one. It is trying to say something about the generality of a given phenomenon (MI). It is quantitative research because quantitative research aims to make claims about universality and seeks to measure things, count, and compare statistically.

**Participants**

The subjects in this study included 113 consecutive interpreting trainees majoring in English Translation, male and female, studying at Allameh Tabataba’i University and Islamic Azad
University, Shahre Qods Branch. None of them had prior professional experience in translating or interpreting. Most were in the age group of 20-30 years old. Persian was their language A (mother tongue), and English was their language B (foreign language).

**Instruments**

At the beginning of the experiment, an IELTS (2007) test was run to homogenize the participants. As the listening skill was an essential component of the study, the participants took the listening exam. The same version of the listening test was used for all classes. Another instrument of this study was a Multiple Intelligence (MI) questionnaire translated and edited by Azmoonyar Institute (2015), a credited institute in translating and editing international psychological questionnaires. It includes 80 questions and covers all eight categories of intelligence that Gardner (2004) proposed.

The researcher designed another questionnaire to collect information about students' backgrounds. It was intended to collect information about the subjects’ A and B languages and whether they came from a bilingual or multilingual family and had any prior experience of professional translating and interpreting. At last, their performance in consecutive interpreting was tested at the end of the semester. As there were two raters to grade the students in this study, their performance was recorded, and their notes were collected.

**Language proficiency test**

The proficiency test used here was the listening part of a formal IELTS General exam. There were 40 questions to be answered in 40 minutes. Every attempt was made to simulate the exam conditions as the actual exams in all classes. The time and the instructions were the same as the actual exams. The scoring conformed to the IELTS General listening band’s standard band score on the official site of www.ieltstehran.com.

**Multiple intelligences questionnaire**

As an essential part of this research was about multiple intelligences, and the original MI test was in English, finding a localized version of the test was necessary. The English test included 80 questions with Likert scale answers, which consisted of "very low," "low," "medium," "high," and "very high." There were ten questions for every intelligence, and it was rated out of 50. So, the highest score for every intelligence measured 50. It had no time limit, and the subjects had to think about every item carefully before answering them. The highest score in this questionnaire was considered the total score of MI. A translated and localized version of the test developed and produced by Azmoonyar Institute (2015) was used. A psychologist from the same institute was asked to score the answer sheets and analyze the data.

**Background questionnaire**

To control other factors that might affect the experiment results, the researcher developed a questionnaire to check the subjects’ backgrounds. The items included family, language, education, professional work, and travel background. Family background was included to see if the subjects used one language or more at home. The language background was to find out whether the issues were professionals in English or other languages. Education background was considered to see if they had any degrees in languages. Their professional background was checked to see if they had any prior experience in translating or interpreting, making them amateurs in this field. Finally, their travel background was checked to see whether they had any knowledge of communicating in other languages in real situations.

**Consecutive interpreting performance test**

This study was carried out at the undergraduate level and, the subjects were the students of consecutive interpreting courses. The researcher used "Consecutive Interpreting: A Practice Book" (FARAHZAD, MOUSAVI, & GHOMI, 2017) as the semester’s coursebook. All the skills that the researcher found necessary for this course are in this book, including memory enhancement, public speaking skills, and notetaking. At the end of the semester, a summative test checked all the skills mentioned above. The researcher used a VOA podcast for all subjects to homogenize the test material. The topic of the podcast was general and did not contain any jargon. The researcher recorded their performance and collected their notes for further analysis.
Data analysis
The total size of the population registered 113, consisting of 55 males and 58 females. The standardized scores (Z-scores) were computed for total MI and consecutive interpreting performance to test the lack of univariate outliers. The results exhibited in Table 1 indicated that all Z-scores fell within the ranges of +/- 3. An inspection of the data indicated that two female participants and two male participants had Z-scores higher than -3. These students were dropped out to reduce the sample size from 113 to 109. It should be noted that Z-scores can be evaluated at .05, .01, and .001 levels. That is to say, any Z-score beyond +/- 1.96 is considered significant at the .05 level. The critical values for .01 and .001 levels are +/- 2.58 and +/- 3.29 (FIELD, 2018, p. 79).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of standardized scores

| Standardized Scores | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| IELTS               | 113| -1.671  | 2.639   | 0.000 | 1.000          |
| Total MI            | 113| -3.677  | 2.437   | 0.000 | 1.000          |
| Interpreting       | 113| -3.899  | 1.503   | 0.000 | 1.000          |

Lack of multivariate outliers was probed through Mahalanobis Distances (M.D.), which were compared against chi-square’s critical value at .001 levels for three variables, i.e., 31.26 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the M.D. Since the maximum MD of 20.03 was lower than 31.26, it was concluded that the present data did not suffer from any multivariate outliers.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of mahalanobis distances; testing multivariate outliers

| Mahalanobis Distance | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
|                      | 109| 2.434   | 20.035  | 8.917 | 4.105          |

The normality assumption was checked through skewness and kurtosis indices and their ratios over the standard errors (Table 3). The absolute value of ratios of skewness and kurtosis were lower than 1.96 for all variables.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics; testing normality of data

| Gender | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|--------|----------|----------|
|        | Statistic| Std. Error| Ratio| Statistic| Std. Error| Ratio|
| Male   | IELTS    | .537     | .327   | 1.64 | -473 | .644 | -.73 |
| Total MI | -0.92 | .327 | -0.28 | -709 | .644 | -1.10 |
| Female | IELTS    | .582     | .319   | 1.82 | -343 | .628 | -0.55 |
| Total MI | .005 | .319 | 0.02 | -500 | .628 | 0.80 |

Interrater reliability
Two raters scored the consecutive interpreting performance of the participants. The interrater reliability was computed. Table 4 displays the results of Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient computed to estimate the inter-rater reliability of the two raters who rated the participants’ performance on the consecutive interpreting. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was a significant agreement between the two raters (r (107) = .904, representing a large effect size, p = .000)

Table 4. Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient; inter-rater reliability of consecutive interpreting performance

| Rater 1 | Rater 2 |
|---------|---------|
| Pearson Correlation | .904** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N       | 109     |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
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**KR-21 reliability indices**
Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics and KR-21 reliability indices for the IELTS and total multiple intelligences (MI). The results showed that the reliability indices IELTS and total MI were .88 and .87, respectively.

|               | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Variance | KR-21 |
|---------------|---|---------|---------|-------|----------------|----------|-------|
| IELTS         | 109|         |         | 17.68 | 8.233          | 67.776   | 0.88  |
| Total MI      | 109| 203     | 333     | 265.59| 26.169         | 684.819  | 0.87  |

**Source:** Search data.

**Exploring the research questions**

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between interpreter trainees’ total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance?

Table 6 displays the results of the Pearson correlations computed to investigate if any significant relationship existed between consecutive interpreting performance and the total MI among the entire sample. The results indicated no significant correlation between consecutive interpreting performance and the total MI among the whole sample (r (107) = .184, representing a weak effect size (p = .056). So, it can be concluded that the first null hypothesis was confirmed.

|               | Consecutive Interpreting Performance |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
|               | Total Sample | Male | Female |              |
| Total MI      | Pearson Correlation | .184 | .020   | 285           |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)  | .056 | .886   | .033          |
|               | N               | 109  | 53     | 56            |

**Source:** Search data.

Besides the normality assumptions and lack of univariate and multivariate outliers, which were discussed earlier, Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient also assumes that the relationship between the two variables is linear and the variances of the two variables are roughly equal, i.e., homoscedasticity. These two assumptions can be checked through scatter plots. An inspection of Scatter Plot 6.1 reveals that the assumption of linearity was violated for the total sample and two groups. The relationship between total MI and consecutive interpreting performance showed clear rising-and-falling patterns. However, the assumption of homoscedasticity was retained. None of the scatter plots formed a funnel shape, i.e., narrow at one end and wide at the other end.
Scatter Plot 6.1, Testing assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity between consecutive interpreting performance and total MI.

Source: Search data.
CONCLUSION
The present research attempted to investigate the relationship between the total MI score and consecutive interpreting performance in interpreter trainees. It also investigated if there existed any relationship between the trainees’ gender and their consecutive interpreting performance. An attempt was made to provide a similar situation for all classes and control other variables that might have affected the results, such as being bilingual, being raised in a bilingual family, being a professional or amateur translator or interpreter, etc.

The experiment results regarding the first research question demonstrated that no significant relationship was found between consecutive interpreting trainees’ total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance. As multiple intelligences include eight categories, there may be a relationship between each type and consecutive interpreting performance, which should be investigated in other studies. As this study is a pioneer in studying the effects of multiple intelligences on consecutive interpreting trainees’ performance, the research is expecting to pave the way for similar research shortly.

Regarding the second research question, as the results presented in Section 5 above indicate, there was a significant relationship between the females’ total MI score and their consecutive interpreting performance. The results of this experiment are in line with similar experiments regarding gender. Cecot (2001) found a significant difference between male and female simultaneous interpreters’ approaches to prosody with women’s superiority. Ryan (2015) also reported a gender imbalance in conference interpreting with women’s domination. Collard & Defrancq (2016) revealed that women had longer E.V.S. than men. All the findings above show that females may perform better in the Iranian courses of interpreter training based on their level of multiple intelligences. It is also worth mentioning that other factors at play, such as culture and the different roles each gender plays in society. As Hilmioğlu (2015) found, there was also a gender imbalance in translation and interpretation in Turkey because men have a higher social status than women. This difference can also be attributed to individual differences. One way to explain the personal difference is the MI theory that the researcher tries to highlight in this study. Different intelligence levels may have a crucial effect on different genders’ performances (in this case, consecutive interpreting performance).

As several studies show the role of MI in language teaching and learning contexts (RICHARDS & RODGERS, 2001; GARDNER, 2006; ARNOLD & FONSECA, 2004), it can be concluded that this theory can help the trainers in interpreter training courses. Thus, this research and the ones that may come in the future may pave the way for interpreter training courses and interpreter trainers to look at different levels of individual differences according to their intelligence levels. It can help them find new ways of training individuals based on their multiple intelligences. This research can also help interpreter trainers use different approaches based on modern psychology like MI theory and appreciate the individual differences present in their students. Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study and other similar studies in the future will prove fruitful in the selection and training processes of interpreters.

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A relação entre a pontuação total de MI e o desempenho consecutivo de interpretação em intérpretes estagiários iranianos

La relación entre la puntuación total de MI y el desempeño de interpretación consecutiva en intérpretes en formación iraníes masculinos y femeninos

Resumo
Este estudo descritivo empírico teve como objetivo encontrar uma relação entre as pontuações totais de MI (Inteligências Múltiplas) de intérpretes estagiários iranianos e seu desempenho consecutivo de interpretação. Também buscou determinar se há relação entre o gênero dos intérpretes estagiários e seu desempenho em interpretação consecutiva. A pesquisadora sempre encontrou a superioridade de estagiárias do sexo feminino em aulas consecutivas de interpretação e queria saber se existe alguma relação entre o gênero das estagiárias e seu desempenho consecutivo de interpretação. No início, um teste padrão de proficiência em inglês (IELTS, 2007) foi administrado para homogeneizar os estagiários. Cento e treze participantes, todos alunos de graduação em Tradução para o Inglês, participaram do estudo. Por fim, 109 participantes foram escolhidos para o estudo. O coeficiente de correlação produto-momento de Pearson mostrou uma correlação significativa entre a pontuação total de MI em estagiárias de intérpretes do sexo feminino e o desempenho consecutivo de interpretação.

Palavras-chave: Interpretação consecutiva (IC). Gênero. Estagiários de intérprete. Pontuação de inteligências múltiplas (MI).

Abstract
This empirical descriptive study aimed at finding a relationship between Iranian trainee interpreters’ total MI (Multiple Intelligences) scores and their consecutive interpreting performance. It also tried to determine if there is any relationship between the trainee interpreters’ gender and their consecutive interpreting performance. At first, a standard English proficiency test (IELTS, 2007) was administered to homogenize the trainees. One hundred thirteen participants who were all undergraduate students of English Translation took part in the study. At last, 109 of the participants were chosen for the study. Pearson’s Product-moment correlation coefficient showed a significant correlation between total MI score in female interpreter trainees and consecutive interpreting performance.

Keywords: Consecutive interpreting (CI). Gender. Interpreter trainees. Multiple intelligences (MI) score.

Resumen
Este estudio descriptivo empírico tuvo como objetivo encontrar una relación entre los puntajes totales de MI (Inteligencias Múltiples) de los intérpretes en formación iraníes y su desempeño de interpretación consecutiva. También trató de determinar si existe alguna relación entre el género de los intérpretes en formación y su desempeño en la interpretación consecutiva. La investigadora siempre se ha encontrado con la superioridad de las alumnas en formación en clases de interpretación consecutivas y quería averiguar si existe alguna relación entre el género de las alumnas y su interpretación consecutiva. Al principio, se administró una prueba estándar de dominio del inglés (IELTS, 2007) para homogeneizar a los alumnos. En el estudio participaron ciento trece participantes, todos estudiantes de licenciatura en Traducción al Inglés. Finalmente, 109 de los participantes fueron elegidos para el estudio. El coeficiente de correlación producto-momento de Pearson mostró una correlación significativa entre la puntuación total de MI en las intérpretes en formación y el rendimiento de interpretación consecutiva.

Palabras-clave: Interpretación consecutiva (IC). Género. Aprendices de intérprete. Puntaje de inteligencias múltiples (MI).