

Factors Affecting Consecutive Interpretation: An Investigation From L2 Learners' Perspectives

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Abstract

As people in the world are more interconnected, the need to communicate with each other, especially with those who do not share the same language, increases exponentially. The role of an interpreter, therefore, becomes more crucial than ever. A growing body of research on interpretation aspects has been conducted, especially those related to the obstacles learners usually face when orally translating from one language to another. However, very few works, or even none, have focused on the problems that have the most influential effect on learners' interpretation quality. This study aims to fill in such a gap by employing a survey design, with the participation of 82 Vietnamese undergraduates who were taking interpretation courses at a private university. The results from the descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and linear regression analysis showed that listening comprehension, unfamiliar contents and time pressure were the most challenging issues that the participants faced. Recommendations for students and teachers as well as for future researchers were also presented.

Keywords: consecutive interpretation, common problems, listening comprehension, time pressure, unfamiliar contents.

1. Introduction

As the world of the economy becomes more globalized and people from all parts of the world are more interconnected than ever, the demand for mutual understanding across countries is increasing (Schuster & Baixauli-Olmos, 2018). However, it is apparent that different languages constitute significant barriers to communication due to the discrepancies in linguistic and cultural aspects. To overcome these obstacles, effective interpretive skills between languages are needed, which can be considered as a bridge for human communication (Gentile et al., 1996; Harto, 2014). As a result, a large number of schools have paid more attention to the training of these skills for their students. In fact, interpretation is a compulsory subject for most English-major students at many universities in Vietnam. However, this is a challenging and complicated subject to master. According to Christoffels and Groot (2004), interpreting is a

complicated task when the interpreter consistently engages in comprehending, processing, and producing language simultaneously. Besides, the quality of language interpretation depends on the specific capabilities and tactics of the interpreter gained through time and experience (Marta, 2012). An illustration of how challenging interpretation is could be found via the analysis of students' scores in the final examinations at a private university in Vietnam. Particularly, of 210 students learning interpretation in 2021, more than 40% scored below 5.0 in their examinations, which showed that many students were still struggling with this subject. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate the problems that had the strongest impact on learners' interpretation performances.

Many studies have been conducted on common obstacles encountered by learners of interpretation, especially consecutive

interpretation (Pratiwi, 2016; Nurfauziyah, 2017; Nguyen, 2012; Dang, 2010; Arumí Ribas, 2012; Suaib et al., 2020) or on possible solutions to deal with these common issues (Nurfauziyah, 2017; Nguyen, 2012; Arumí Ribas, 2012; Chunli et al., 2021). However, very little research, or even none, has explored which factors affect interpretation the most, which necessitates further studies.

This research aims to fill such a gap, and thereby brings a number of benefits to different parties such as students, teachers, and future researchers. Firstly, this research allows students to recognize the most problematic issues in interpretation that need more attention and practice. Secondly, it provides lecturers with in-depth information about students' interpretation problems, based on which they can modify their teaching accordingly. Finally, this research serves as a foundation for future studies that aim at finding appropriate solutions to interpretation problems.

Consequently, this research mainly delves into answers to the following questions:

1. What common problems do students encounter in consecutive interpretation?
2. What problems have the strongest

impact on students' consecutive interpretation quality?

2. Literature review

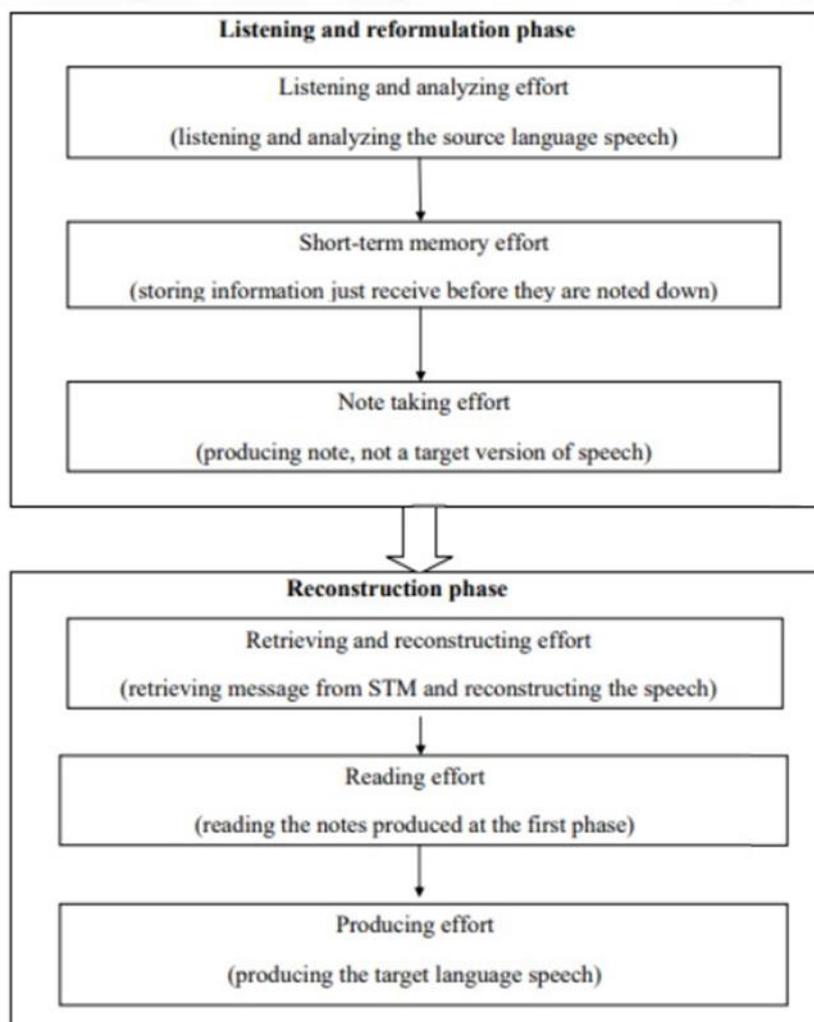
2.1 Definition of consecutive interpretation

Jones (2002) conducted a study and defined consecutive interpretation as follows:

Consecutive interpreter listens to the totality of a speaker's comments, or at least a significant passage, and then reconstitutes the speech with the help of notes taken while listening; the interpreter is thus speaking consecutively to the original speaker, hence again the name (pp.5-6).

In a more detailed manner, Gile (1995) referred to consecutive interpreting as a process that consists of two phases: a listening and reformulation phase and a reconstruction phase. In the first phase, interpreters listen and analyze the source language speech, storing information just received before they are noted down and producing notes. In the second phase, interpreters retrieve information from short-term memory and reconstruct the speech; then, they read the notes produced at the first phase and produce the target language speech. This progress is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 1. Gile's Effort Model for consecutive interpreting



2.2 Common problems when performing consecutive interpretation

Difficulties involved in the interpretation process are categorized into two main types: internal and external.

2.2.1 External factors

Time pressure

As a feature of interpretation, students are required to orally translate information in a short period of time (Pratiwi, 2016). In fact, according to Christoffels and Groot (2004), interpretation comprises several tasks to be done simultaneously, which demands different qualities from interpreters. Therefore, it is likely that they do not have enough time to elaborate their work (Nguyen, 2012). Moreover, there are times when students cannot interpret some specific details, such as numbers

because they must convey the whole segment (Nurfauziyah, 2017). As stated by Garretson (1981), even with a good memory, they still struggle to memorize too many words under the pressure of time. In conclusion, limited time is considered an obstacle for interpreters to perform well regarding fluency, meaning accuracy, and appropriate choice of words (Seedhouse, 2004).

Speed

Another problem in interpretation is the speed of the speaker, which students find difficult to adapt to (Chunli et al., 2021; Suaib et al., 2020; Arumí Ribas, 2012; Nguyen, 2012; Flowerdew & Miller, 1996). As stated by Nurfauziyah (2017) and Nguyen (2012), they have trouble grasping the main idea of the source speech due to fast speaking, which usually takes place in natural talks. Not only does delivery speed

affect listening comprehension but it also happens to be the major problem in taking notes (Arumí Ribas, 2012; Nguyen, 2012). According to Arumí Ribas (2012), the explanation is that lack of understanding leads to poor quality of notes taken by students.

Accent

The accent is a factor that might determine interpretation quality (Youhua, 2009; Chunli et al., 2021). Students are likely to face difficulties in the listening phase because of little exposure to different accents (Nguyen, 2012). To support this statement, Yagang (1994) stated that listeners tend to be acquainted with the accents to which they are often exposed. For example, in case they only listen to standard British or American accents, it would be hard for them to comprehend other accents. This problem is inevitable as it is impossible to “expect all the speakers to speak the standard language” (Chunli et al., 2021).

Sound

Sound-related problems are also mentioned in several studies (Dang, 2010; Arumí Ribas, 2012; Pratiwi, 2016; Nguyen, 2012), including poor quality of the recordings (Dang, 2010; Arumí Ribas, 2012; Nguyen, 2012) and background noise (Pratiwi, 2016; Nguyen, 2012). These factors may distract students from listening to the source (Pratiwi, 2016; Nguyen, 2012); therefore, they cannot fully get the speech's content (Pratiwi). In brief, sound distortion obstructs listening comprehension (Arumí Ribas, 2012; Nguyen, 2012).

2.2.2 Internal factors

Listening skill

The first fundamental of interpretation is to listen carefully to what the speech is about in order to comprehend the keynote. It is a complex cognitive process from "listening" to "understanding" a spoken language (Rost, 2005). During an observation, Rahmah et al. (2020) found that students of interpretation normally encounter difficulties in listening to

the source language. Some common causes were believed to be unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar topics (Rahimirad & Zare-ee, 2015). In addition, lack of practice and concentration was also the root of poor listening comprehension (Arumí Ribas, 2012). In some cases, several of these issues are related to each other in the interpreting process. For example, when the students do not practice listening skills daily, it leads to listening problems that directly or indirectly decline students' concentration and diminish the quality of the interpretation (Pratiwi, 2016).

Memory

A good memory is an essential criterion for interpreters that directly affects the quality of the interpretation (Zhang Wei, 2006; Phelan, 2001). A complete memory system contains sensory memory, short-term memory (STM), and long-term memory (LTM). In discussing qualification requirements in interpreting, Phelan (2001) stated that:

The interpreter needs a good short-term memory to retain what he or she has just heard and a good long-term memory to put the information into context. Ability to concentrate is a factor as is the ability to analyze and process what is heard. (pp.4-5)

The combination of STM and LTM is indispensable to the overall memory quality. However, because of the nature of interpreting, STM plays the most critical role in the consecutive interpreting model, which comprises encoding the information from the source language, storing data, and then processing it into the target language (Gile, 1995). This complicated process requires the interpreter to identify and process the information quickly for any numbers, terminologies, abbreviations, and proper names; otherwise, those messages will simply go away in short-term memory (Lu & Chen, 2013). Therefore, the limitations of STM prevent interpreters from retaining certain information. Additionally, the lack of a capacity

to concentrate also has a significant influence on the interpreter's memory. It has been noticed that some interpreters did not focus on the process of listening and reproduction which is supposed to cause difficulties in memorizing, due to numerous reasons such as distraction, forgetfulness, carelessness, thinking about what has been said previously (Al-Harashseh et al., 2020).

Note-taking

Note-taking is another necessary skill in consecutive interpretation, which could help interpreters memorize the essential information (Lu, 2013; Chunli et al., 2021). According to Gile (2009), taking notes can be a vital method to relieve the pressure of working memory. Although the interpreter may have grasped the ideas of a speech, he or she cannot remember every detail in the speech as a result of poor short-term memory. However, there are a few common problems that affect the quality of note taking. Firstly, the speed of delivery is not only a difficulty in listening but also in the note-taking process. According to Ribas (2012), the rate of original speech distribution is the major problem in the interpreting process. Secondly, some interpreters just try to write entire words and sentences rather than focus on the main idea of the speech (Al-Harashseh et al., 2020; Chunli et al., 2021). However, it is quite difficult for the interpreter to write down everything in the time constraint to keep up with the speaker (Chunli et al., 2021). Therefore, the consequence of attempting to record every word is that the interpreter may omit some vital information and distort the comprehension of the speech (Al-Harashseh et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and instrument

The present study employed the quantitative approach, particularly via a survey design. According to Creswell (2013), survey design provides a quantitative or numerical description of population trends and attitudes. The first and

foremost advantage of the survey methodology is the capacity to generalize to larger populations by summarizing findings based on data from a sample (Louis & Richard, 2014). Moreover, surveys can be implemented at a low cost and in a relatively short period of time (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). This is because the researcher can conduct the survey, adjust, or restart it whenever they want. By designing a well-structured survey, researchers can generate standardized data for analysis and statistics (Louis & Richard, 2014).

In this study, the researcher used the 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), including 7 sections. There were six independent variables (listening skill, memory, note-taking, time pressure, speech delivery, and sound) and one dependent variable (interpretation quality), with 29 items in total to measure students' attitude towards the common problems they encountered in English - Vietnamese consecutive interpretation. These sections and items were generated based on the concepts in the literature review.

3.2 Participants

Eighty-two (out of 120) English-major students, who were learning or completed at least one interpretation course regardless of their admission years at a private university in Vietnam, participated in the research. There were 36 males and 46 females, aged 19 to 22, whose English proficiency was expected to be from B1 to B2 according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). All of the students joined the research on a voluntary basis.

3.3 Data collection procedure

To collect proper quantitative data quickly and conveniently, the researcher designed an online survey using Google Form. The themes and statement items were based on the literature review. Then, a pilot test was performed on 30 participants, and the results were checked against the Cronbach's alpha value using

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 26. The alpha value ($\alpha > .8$) showed that the survey was highly reliable and internally consistent, ready for the full-scale research. Next, essential modifications on the wording of the statements were made to assure there was no ambiguity or possible misunderstandings. Following this, the final version of the survey was sent to the participants via their school email. They had five days in order to finish the form; after this time, the researcher proactively contacted the non-respondents via email again to remind them of the survey. Finally, the researcher received 82 relevant responses after removing the inappropriate ones (incomplete answers or answers following a fixed pattern). The whole procedure took place in seven days.

3.4 Data analysis

Initially, the survey’s data was converted into a spreadsheet of Microsoft Excel. Then, the researchers utilized the descriptive statistics method with the facilitation of SPSS software to provide inferential analyses for all independent and dependent variables using means and standard deviations. To be precise, the data were firstly checked against Cronbach’s Alpha for reliability. Next, one-sample t-tests were run to examine the tendency of answers with “Neutral”. Finally, the researcher used the exploratory factor analysis

(EFA) and linear regression analysis to measure the extent to which each problem impacts the interpretation quality.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability and consistency of the survey

All the values of Cronbach’s Alpha and Corrected Item with Total Correlation for the 7 sections were above .64 and .3, respectively. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha value for the whole questionnaire was .931. Therefore, it could be concluded that the survey was highly reliable, with good internal stability and consistency (Creswell, 2010).

4.2 Participants’ perspectives on each theme and item

Values of means and one-sample t-tests (pre-set test value = 2) were used to measure participants’ attitude towards the difficulties they faced. The seven themes were Listening Skill (LS), Memory (MM), Note-taking (NT), Time Pressure (TP), Speech Delivery (SD), Sound (SO), and Interpretation Quality (IQ) (See Appendix for detailed information).

Listening skill

Table 1. Participants’ perspective on Listening skill (LS)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
LS1	82	3.21	1.027	.113	.000	1.207
LS2	82	2.94	1.158	.128	.000	.939
LS3	82	3.87	.926	.102	.000	1.866
LS4	82	3.43	1.054	.116	.000	1.427
LS5	82	2.74	1.163	.128	.000	.744
LS6	82	3.04	1.309	.145	.000	1.037
LS7	82	3.04	1.127	.124	.000	1.037

As can be seen from Table 1, all of the p values of the 7 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in

interpretation. Moreover, LS3 ($M = 3.87$) and LS4 ($M = 3.43$) had the highest values among all of the items in the theme, which meant that these two were considered the most common problems in the LS theme.

Memory:

Table 2. Participants' perspective on Memory (MM)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
MM1	82	3.61	1.204	.133	.000	1.160
MM2	82	3.16	1.083	.120	.000	1.159
MM3	82	3.37	1.083	.120	.000	1.366

Table 2 revealed that all of the p values of the 7 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as

challenges in interpretation. MM1 ($M = 3.61$) and MM3 ($M = 3.37$) had the highest values among all of the items in the theme, which means that these two were considered the most problematic factors in the MM theme.

Note-taking:

Table 3. Participants' perspective on Note-taking (NT)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
NT1	82	2.91	1.209	.134	.000	0.915
NT2	82	3.09	1.188	.131	.000	1.085
NT3	82	2.22	.982	.108	.046	.220
NT4	82	2.17	1.120	.124	.171	.171
NT5	82	3.73	1.155	.128	.000	1.732

As can be seen, most of the p values of the 7 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in interpretation.

However, item NT4's p value was 0.171 ($p > 0.05$). This meant most of the

participants had more of a disagreement about considering this item as a problem in interpretation. NT2 ($M = 3.09$) and NT5 ($M = 3.73$) had the highest mean value among all of the items in the theme, which meant that these two were considered the most problematic factors in the NT theme.

Time pressure:

Table 4. Participants’ perspective on Time pressure (TP)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
TP1	82	3.40	1.087	.120	.000	1.402
TP2	82	3.01	1.024	.113	.000	1.012
TP3	82	3.49	1.147	.127	.000	1.488

Table 4 demonstrated that all of the p values of the 3 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in

interpretation. TP1 ($M = 3.40$) and TP3 ($M = 3.49$) had the highest values among all of the items in the theme, which meant that these two were considered the most problematic factors in the TP theme.

Speed delivery:

Table 5. Participants’ perspective on Speed delivery (SD)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
SD1	82	3.62	1.107	.122	.000	1.622
SD2	82	2.90	1.061	.117	.000	.902
SD3	82	3.09	1.288	.142	.000	1.085
SD4	82	3.68	1.017	.112	.000	1.683

As can be seen from Table 5, all of the p values of the 4 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in

interpretation. SD1 ($M = 3.62$) and SD4 ($M = 3.68$) had the highest values among all of the items in the theme, which meant that these two were considered the most problematic factors in the SD theme.

Sound:

Table 6. Participants’ perspective on Sound (SO)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
SO1	82	4.10	1.084	.120	.000	2.098
SO2	82	4.17	1.016	.112	.000	2.171

Table 6 showed that all of the p values of the 2 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in interpretation.

Although there was not much difference in SO1 and SO2's mean values, it still could be considered that both were common problems that learners often faced during their consecutive interpretation.

Interpretation quality:

Table 7. Participants' perspective on Interpretation quality (IQ)

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
IQ1	82	3.35	1.035	.114	.000	1.354
IQ2	82	2.83	.979	.108	.000	.829
IQ3	82	2.94	.907	.100	.000	.939
IQ4	82	3.73	1.078	.119	.000	1.732
IQ5	82	3.65	1.082	.119	.000	1.646

As can be seen, all of the p values of the 5 items were below .001 ($p < .001$) and the Mean Difference figures were positive (> 0). This meant most of the participants had no disagreements about considering these as challenges in interpretation. IQ4 ($M = 3.73$) and IQ5 ($M = 3.65$) had the highest values among all of the items in the theme, which meant that these two were considered the most problematic factors in the IQ theme.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and linear regression analysis were used to explore the underlying relationship between independent and dependent variables (Hair et al., 2009).

In this study, the dependent variables were items in theme 7 (interpretation quality) and independent variables were the other 6 themes' items.

EFA for independent variables

The results of EFA for independent variables were as follows:

4.3. The impact of the problematic items on interpretation quality

Table 8. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1096.693
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

Table 9. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction	Sums of Squared	
	Total	%	of Cumulative %		Total	Variance
	Loadings					
	Total	%	of Cumulative %	Total	Variance	Cumulative
	Variance					%
1	2.842	56.837	56.837	2.842	56.837	56.837
2	1.077	21.547	78.383	1.077	21.547	78.383
3	.534	10.685	89.068			
4	.314	6.283	95.351			
5	.232	4.649	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

which was considered appropriate (Hair et al. 2009).

Firstly, according to Kaiser (1974), the KMO value was $.5 < .824 < 1$ and $p < .001$ in table 8 indicated that factor analysis was appropriate for the survey's data.

Thirdly, according to Gerbing and Anderson (1988), only components with Total variance extracted $\geq 50\%$ and the Eigenvalue coefficient > 1 were retained. From Table 9, three to five groups could be chosen for Linear Regression analysis.

Secondly, the Factor loading was applied to assess the significance level of EFA. For these data, Factor loading was $0.6 > 0.5$,

Table 10. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Variable	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
LS1					
LS2			.681		
LS3				.815	
LS4				.677	
LS5					
LS6			.662		

LS7			
MM1	.691		
MM2			
MM3			
NT1		.810	
NT2			
NT3			
NT4			
NT5	.714		
TP1		.701	
TP2		.897	
TP3		.794	
SD1			.770
SD2			.764
SD3			.848
SD4		.748	
SO1	.796		
SO2	.686		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

From Table 13, five new groups were generated as representatives, SO (Sound: SO1 + SO2), TP (Time Pressure: TP1 + TP2 + TP3), LS (Listening Skill: LS3 + LS4), UC (Unfamiliar Content: LS2 + LS6), SD (Speech Delivery: SD1 + SD2 + SD3). As LS3 was about new

vocabulary and LS4 was about unfamiliar topics, the new name for LS3 + LS4 was "Unfamiliar Content" (UC).

EFA for dependent variables were as follows:

Table 11. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.705
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	166.807
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 14. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
3	.695 ^c	.483	.463		.59401	2.281

a. Predictors: (Constant), LS, UC, TP

b. Dependent Variable: IQ

The Durbin–Watson coefficient ($D = 2.281$) in table 14, which was between 1.5 and 2.5, showed that the model was appropriate and had no autocorrelation.

Table 15.
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3	Regression	25.676	3	8.559	24.255	.000 ^d
	Residual	27.522	78	.353		
	Total	53.198	81			

a. Dependent Variable: IQ

b. Predictors: (Constant), LS, UC, TP

The p value in table 15 was less than 0.05, which meant that the regression model was appropriate.

Table 16. Coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.474	.319		1.486	.141		
	LS	.354	.086	.373	4.121	.000	.809	1.237
	UC	.225	.069	.304	3.259	.002	.765	1.307
	TP	.184	.077	.221	2.382	.020	.767	1.303

a. Dependent Variable: IQ

Figure 2. Histogram

The value of the variance inflation factor (VIF) in table 16 was less than 2, indicating that

multicollinearity did not occur.

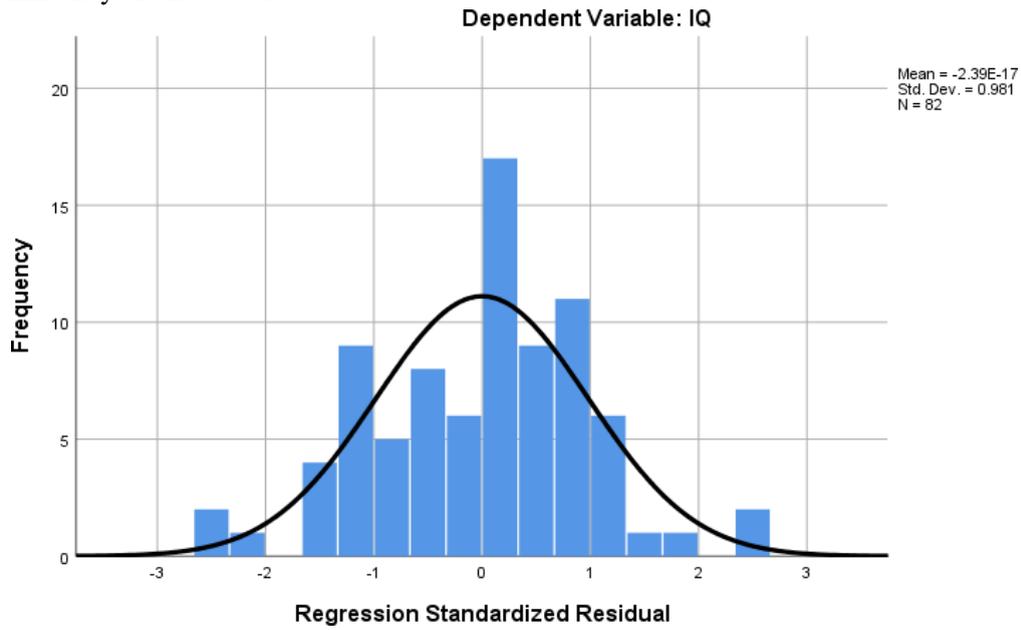


Figure 3. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual

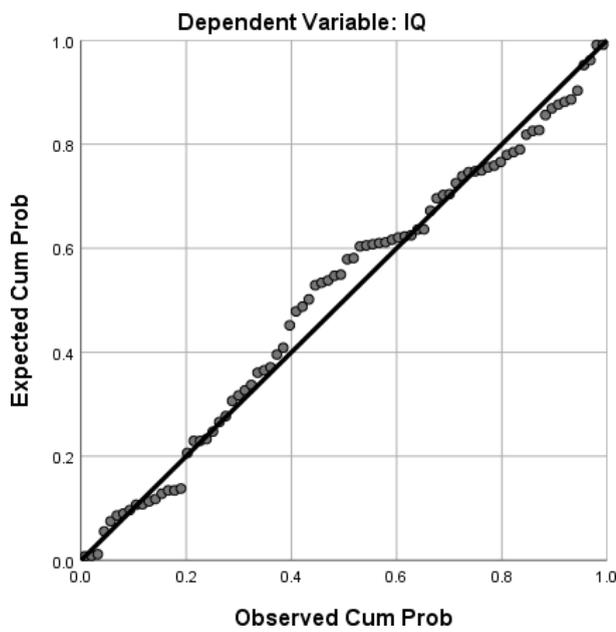
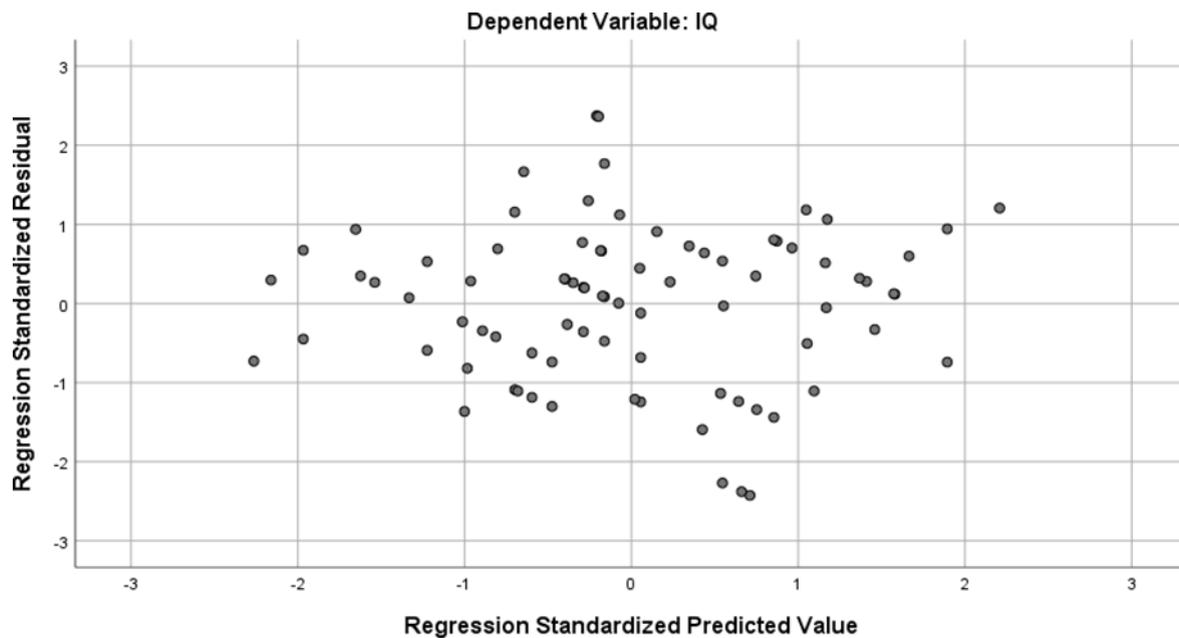


Figure 4. Scatter Plot diagram



The diagrams in Figure 2, 3 and 4 all confirmed that the assumptions of a linear model were not violated.

The Linear Regression formula was generated as follows:

$$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

$$= 0.373 * LS + 0.304 * UC + 0.221 * TP + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y was dependent variable

X1, X2, X3 were independent variables

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 were regression beta coefficients of LS, UC, TP respectively

ε was the model's error term (also known as the residuals) (Anghelach et al., 2014)

5. Discussion

The most common problems faced by learners of consecutive interpretation

One of the findings of the present study is that learners usually had difficulties with sound quality, unfamiliar vocabulary, note taking, and smoothness, or fluency, when performing consecutive interpretation. The two most prevalent obstacles were speeches with background noise ($M = 4.17$) and speeches with low volume ($M = 4.10$). The third common

problem was unfamiliar vocabulary ($M = 3.87$). These results were in line with studies by Dang (2010), Arumí Ribas (2012) Pratiwi (2016), Nguyen (2012) and (Rahimirad & Zare-ee, 2015). The explanation could be that these directly or indirectly affected learners' listening comprehension, which is vital in interpretation (Gile, 1997). For example, when the sound quality is poor or when there are many technical terms, input cannot be processed and turned into output, leading to interpretation failures. The fourth common issue was slow notetaking ($M = 3.73$), which aligns with the reports by Al-Harashseh et al. (2020) and Chunli et al. (2021). It is possible that learners wrote down the entire words or phrases, causing them not to be able to follow and comprehend the speech. All of these problems led to the next one, which was smooth interpretation ($M = 3.73$). This was not reported in previous research as a common issue, probably because it was only the result of the more popular ones which were mentioned above.

Most influential factors affecting interpretation quality

Another major finding of this study is that listening skills, unfamiliar contents, and time pressure were the most problematic with learners. In particular, the beta values in the

linear regression analysis showed that listening skills were the most influential factor ($\beta=3.73$), followed by pressure of time ($\beta=.304$) and unfamiliar contents ($\beta=.221$). This finding is predictable as listening and contents were in the very first phase of interpretation (Gile, 1997). Without the adequate understanding of input, learners were unable to obtain the key message for language transference. Regarding time pressure, as confirmed by Christoffels and Groot (2004) and Nguyen (2012), students had to perform several tasks simultaneously during the process of oral translation, so they found it very challenging to complete these actions in a short amount of time, which eventually results in low performances.

One interesting point is that memory was not considered as either a common problem or a key factor affecting interpretation quality. There are two possible explanations for this. First, as listening skills were so important and influential, the effect of other factors like memory or note-taking skills was less obvious. Second, as proven by Duong et al. (2021), working memory did not play a significant role in lexical acquisition of learners whose age and background education were similar. Therefore, it could also be inferred that memory did not significantly impact interpretation performances in this study due to the participants' individual similarities.

There are multiple pedagogical implications that can be drawn from the aforementioned findings. For one thing, teachers are recommended to choose suitable materials for students' interpretation practice. In particular, high-quality speeches at a normal or even a slow speed, without background noise, should be introduced to students at the initial stage. Further, contents chosen for practice should not be too unfamiliar to students, either in terms of concepts or lexical items. The Proximal Zone of Development by Vygotsky and Cole (1978) can be taken into consideration; in other words, the unfamiliarity should be adequate to motivate learners to gain new knowledge. Another suggestion is that

students need to spend more time improving listening skills as comprehending input is of paramount importance in interpretation. Finally, teachers should give students a longer time to process information before the oral transference of language. Once they are more familiar with the process of interpreting, the difficulty levels can be increased.

6. Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the common problems that students usually encountered when performing consecutive interpretation as well as explore which factors affected the interpretation quality the most. Via a survey design, with factor and linear regression analyses, it was found that sound quality, unfamiliar vocabulary, slow notetaking, and smoothness were the most prevalent issues. In terms of the most influential factors, listening skills ranked first, followed by unfamiliar content and time pressure. Several pedagogical implications were also suggested, mainly focusing on introducing materials and practice from easy levels to more difficult ones to students. However, there are some limitations to the study. First, the sample size was still small, with only 82 participants, due to the small population at the school. Second, the lack of qualitative data might have limited insights into participants' thoughts. Consequently, future researchers are recommended to address these deficiencies by increasing the sample size to 200 or more. Additionally, interviews as well as more complex statistical methods such as structural equation modeling (SEM) should be used to obtain results of higher accuracy and reliability.

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Appendix

COMMON PROBLEMS ENGLISH-MAJOR STUDENTS ENCOUNTER IN ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION

Kindly refer to the number description below and provide us with the genuine preference for each statement.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Agree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Disagree
- 5 - Strongly agree

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
LS1	I cannot understand the speech well if I only listen to it once.	1	2	3	4	5
LS2	I cannot get the main idea because I tend to listen to individual words or phrases.	1	2	3	4	5
LS3	Unfamiliar words in the speech reduce my listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5

LS4	I find it hard to understand the speech when the topic is unfamiliar.	1	2	3	4	5
LS5	In general, my listening skill is not good as I do not have enough practice.	1	2	3	4	5
LS6	I cannot follow the speech because I tend to translate it into Vietnamese in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
LS7	I find it hard to listen for major details.	1	2	3	4	5
MM1	I do not have a good short-term memory.	1	2	3	4	5
MM2	It is hard for me to memorize the main ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
MM3	It is hard for me to memorize major details.	1	2	3	4	5
NT1	Taking notes interrupts my interpretation process.	1	2	3	4	5
NT2	I find it hard to identify the main ideas to note down.	1	2	3	4	5
NT3	It is hard for me to note down major details.	1	2	3	4	5
NT4	I am unable to understand my own notes.	1	2	3	4	5
NT5	My note-taking speed is not fast enough.	1	2	3	4	5
TP1	There is not enough time for me to process information before interpretation.	1	2	3	4	5

TP2	I do not have enough time to complete my interpretation.	1	2	3	4	5
TP3	I cannot deliver a smooth interpretation because of time pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
SD1	I find it hard to understand speech with unfamiliar accents.	1	2	3	4	5
SD2	I am not familiar with accents different from North American accents (from the US, Canada).	1	2	3	4	5
SD3	Unfamiliar accents make me lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5
SD4	It is hard for me to understand speech with fast speed.					
SO1	Speech with low volume prevents me from understanding the main ideas and major details.	1	2	3	4	5
SO2	Speech with background noise prevents me from understanding the main ideas and major details.	1	2	3	4	5
IQ1	In general, I find it hard to perform English-Vietnamese consecutive interpretation.	1	2	3	4	5
IQ2	In general, I find it hard to transfer the main idea of the speech.	1	2	3	4	5
IQ3	In general, I find it hard to transfer the major details of the speech.	1	2	3	4	5
IQ4	In general, I find it hard to perform the interpretation smoothly.	1	2	3	4	5
IQ5	In general, I find it hard to perform the interpretation naturally.	1	2	3	4	5