



EXPLORING STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH MAJORS IN CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING FROM ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE

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Abstract:

This study was carried out to examine English majors' strategies when practicing consecutive interpreting from English to Vietnamese. A questionnaire related to 22 commonly used consecutive interpreting procedures was employed in the study in order to obtain valid results. Then, the researchers presented the questionnaire to 80 respondents, who are second- and fourth-year English majors at Tra Vinh University's Schools of Foreign Languages. Following the collection and analysis of the data, the study revealed that the participants tended to employ techniques aimed at enhancing their consecutive interpretation skills. Moreover, there was no distinction between the two participant groups' frequent use of different types of strategies. Based on the results obtained and the suggestions made for EFL lecturers, English majors, and additional research, this study will be an invaluable resource for future research on consecutive interpretation strategies.

Keywords: English majors, consecutive interpreting, strategies, English to Vietnamese

1. Introduction

Interpreting is a multi-faceted action that involves a sender, a channel, and a recipient, much like any other sort of communication, and allows individuals of diverse languages and cultural backgrounds to communicate with one another. Taherian & Janfeshan (2021) found that interpreting as a contemporary profession has asserted itself in today's multinational societies due to the need for transferring multiple aspects, cultures, beliefs, and viewpoints, as well as communicating. As cited in Afrina and Ardi (2021), nervousness, lack of experience, time pressure, speaking abilities, peers, poor health, and the quality of the audio are some of the challenges in interpreting (Chin, 2010). Regarding the quality of interpretation, there are numerous advantages to interpreting approaches. Strategies are planned, goal-oriented processes that are used to address problems caused

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by an interpreter's limited processing capacity or knowledge gaps or to make their job easier and prevent problems in the future. Li (2015) asserted that despite the significance of strategy acquisition in interpreting education, there has not been much study on the subject.

In the context of Tra Vinh University (TVU), a common issue of almost all English majors in oral translation courses is the satisfactory outcomes. They have encountered problems in interpreting the speaker's message from English to Vietnamese because of many restrictions in the consecutive interpreting (CI) process. The results of these limitations can come from a lack of students' ability to interpret, such as lacking background knowledge, weakness in the relevant skills like listening comprehension, taking notes, memorizing, and expressing. More importantly, most of the student interpreters have quite a lot of difficulty in applying CI strategies to the translation process to reinforce the accuracy of the translation. This leads to fruitless efforts to improve the quality of interpretation and English majors' interpreting competence after finishing the courses. In other words, they failed to employ those strategies that are essential and realistic topics to present in a research paper on interpretation, particularly CI.

The study's key intention is to discover what common CI strategies are employed by English majors at TVU to interpret the monologues from English to Vietnamese. Moreover, the research also considers whether there are any differences between the two groups of respondents, sophomores and seniors. In particular, the major purpose of the study is to answer the following questions:

- 1) What consecutive interpreting strategies are frequently used by English majors?
- 2) Are there any differences in frequently used consecutive interpreting strategies among English majors with respect to their academic year?

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition and theory of consecutive interpreting

"CI is defined as the process of interpreting after the speaker or signer has completed one or more ideas in the SL and pauses while the interpreter transmits that information" (Russell, 2005, p. 136). From the standpoint of Dam (2010), CI, a mode of interpretation, is the procedure by which the interpreter renders the target language version after the speaker has stopped speaking. According to Afrina and Ardi (2021), CI is the procedure of interpreting after the speaker has finished one or more concepts in the SL and the interpreter has sent the information. In other words, CI is a type of interpretation in which the interpreter only conveys a concept after the speaker has expressed one. The interpreter has some processing time to handle the message in this activity, which makes successive interpreting more accurate than simultaneous interpreting.

Many notions of strategy were presented in various strategy or tactic studies by researchers who were interested in the interpretation domain of diverse topics. Napier (2002) called interpreting strategies linguistic coping strategies, which are used to deal

with factors relating to linguists and how they affect interpretation. The used linguistic coping strategies in an interpretation might be the application of language and cultural expertise, the use of translation style, language transference, additions, omission, and substitution. From the concepts presented in previous research papers, CI strategies are planned and targeted approaches applied to deal with challenges, which are caused by incompetence or lack of knowledge of the interpreter, as well as to make the interpreter's job easier and reduce potential pitfalls.

Besides the tactics classification of Kalina (1998, as cited in Liontou, 2011), based on the strategies' notions of Alduhaim and Alkhalidy (2019), Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002), Dong *et al.* (2019), Kalina (1994), Kohn and Kalina (1996), Li (2015), Liontou (2011), Pérez-Ortiz and Forcada (2001), Pym (2005), Tang and Li (2016), and the analyses of Afrina and Ardi (2021), Bartłomiejczyk (2006), Fantinuoli (2017), Wang (2012), Yenkimaleki (2017), the researchers grouped 22 collected strategies into two main categories: the first category includes strategies which boost comprehension and the second one is strategies which reinforce the destination production.

The strategies are arranged into the two major types displayed as follows:

1. Strategies for improving understanding:

- Inferencing,
- Anticipation,
- Preparing,
- Stalling,
- Guessing,
- Skipping,
- Taking advantage of cohesive and coherent devices in the SL,
- Personal association and involvement.

2. Production strategies for translation:

2.1 Conditioned strategies based on the source text:

- Transformation,
- Word-for-word translation.

2.2 Conditioned strategies based on the target text:

- Explicitation,
- Addition,
- Adaptation,
- Using formulaic expressions,
- Reproduction,
- Visualization.

2.3 Strategies for urgent cases:

- Compression,
- Substituting,
- Approximation,
- Informing the client of an interpreting problem,
- Offering an alternative translation in a parallel structure.

2.4 Strategy of repair:

- Not repairing information unless it is critical.

2.2 Related studies

Many studies about the CI strategies were conducted and demonstrated the strategies' importance in assisting interpreters facing many unexpected problems which occur in the interpreting processes and enhancing the accuracy level and quality of interpretations. The benefits of translation tactics are recognized and used not only by expert interpreters but also by instructors in training student interpreters.

The study of Arumi Ribas (2012) is a typical example. The study tried to analyze the interpreting problems that two groups of students at two different training stages encountered and the strategies they used to deal with those problems. The research utilized the questionnaire to distribute to 15 students 8 beginners of Universitat Pompeu Fabra - UPF and 7 advanced students of Universidad de La Laguna - ULL in the final. The last finding revealed that novice learners experience more difficulties than advanced ones. Meanwhile, advanced students employed a broader set of tactics that helped them solve a greater number of issues than beginners. However, when it came to solving problems, there were several strategies that all students had in common.

The study by Li (2015) examined whether undergraduates' usage of strategies is correlated in a positive way with their teacher's inclusion of strategy training in the CI course. To get data for this research, questionnaires were administered to participants, including 41 students 7 males and 34 females, the range of age from 21 to 23, being all juniors with Chinese and English and three of their instructors. Regarding the findings of the examination, data analysis indicates that the undergraduate trainees applied 16 tactics which their teachers had taught them. According to the data collected from the teachers, strategy training was a part of their interpreting courses. And, the correlation analysis found that teaching individual tactics was useful to students' application of those strategies.

The primary aims of the article from Alduhaim and Alkhalidy (2019) were to address the problem from the perspective of the interpreter and focus on the tactics that interpreters employ when working in combat zones by gathering data from interpretations of Mummar Algaddafi's talk during the Arab Spring, as well as Libyan officials' press conferences and two CNN interviews. From the analysis, the conclusion indicated that during combat zones, interpreters employ a variety of tactics, including omission, addition, and approximation.

Dong *et al.* (2019) conducted the research to look at how student interpreters learn interpreting strategies. In this article, the authors based on a thorough literature assessment to create a framework comprising 22 strategies and perform identifying and examining 21 tactics used by student interpreters in a task of B-to-A (English-to-Chinese) consecutive interpretation among two training phases (2nd month and end of the academic year). After that, they used interpreting performance's quantitative and qualitative assessments, which were supported by retrospective and interview data.

Their investigation was fulfilled on 66 university undergraduate students majoring in English at a Chinese university of foreign studies. The study showed two main findings: firstly, as their interpreting training progressed, the students used more of the strategies that interpreting instructors suggested (Type-A strategies, such as explicitation). Secondly, the frequency of Type-A strategies was positively and significantly associated with interpreting performance, whereas the frequency of Type-C strategies was adversely related, particularly at Stage 2.

Apart from the three above studies, Kuswoyo and Audina (2020) performed their examination to explore the CI tactics employed by Yuliana Tansil, an Indonesian interpreter, in a courtroom context. The descriptive qualitative method was used to conduct this research. Data was gathered by using a video recording taken from the official YouTube channel, which was then meticulously transcribed. According to the findings, the interpreter utilised two sorts of consecutive interpretation methods, namely reduction and achievement strategies. The interpreter tended to apply skipping, fragmented sentences, and filtering as reduction strategies.

Afrina and Ardi (2021) discovered the strategies used by low, medium, and high-level students at Universitas Negeri Padang's English Department in CI, an English short speech in Bahasa Indonesia. The researchers used a Zoom meeting to gather data from the CI test. The study was conducted on third-year English Department students who had attended an English-Indonesia interpreting class. A random sampling procedure was used to pick 23% of the 53 students. After analyzing the data, the result revealed that students had difficulty comprehending the SL, as evidenced by the fact that students skipped the source message 86 times while the test was happening. Namely, students at the low and middle levels liked to choose the shipping method, but students at the high level tended to apply the explicitation strategy to fix and clarify the interpretation.

To sum up, almost all previous studies investigated the perception of interpretation strategies of both expert interpreters and training interpreters or students. The main purpose of the above researchers is to examine the strategies used in different phases of training with students and in various contexts with professional interpreters. As mentioned in the above papers, their findings reveal the awareness of students' strategy applying and the importance of those strategies.

3. Methodology

A questionnaire was employed to get valuable data from participants for this research to examine TVU English majors' strategy usage consciousness in English - Vietnamese CI in Oral Translation courses. The study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages at TVU with the participation of 80 English-majored students, including 40 second-year English majors who are studying Oral Translation 1 and 40 fourth-year ones who completed all three oral translations courses that are Oral Translation 1, 2, and 3. The respondents are comprised of 22 males and 58 females who are learning in separate classes.

To investigate the common strategies that are utilized in CI, rarely mentioned in the previous studies (Bartłomiejczyk, 2006 and Li, 2015), the researchers conducted collecting strategies presented in the research of Afrina and Ardi (2021), Alduhaim and Alkhalidy (2019), Al-Salman and Al-Khanji (2002), Bartłomiejczyk (2006), Dong *et al.* (2019), Fantinuoli (2017), Kalina (1994), Kohn and Kalina (1996), Liontou (2011), Pérez-Ortiz and Forcada (2001), Pym (2005), Tang and Li (2016), Wang (2012), and Yenkimaleki (2017). Using the same idea as Dong *et al.* (2019), the researchers selected easier-to-understand approach names while retaining the names of the strategies that were more often used in the literature. For example, removing some duplications and superfluous contents in the source discourse and making them concise in the TL expression is called compression rather than filtering, as use of Kuswoyo and Audina (2020). Finally, the researchers got 22 strategies that tend to be applied in CI.

A trial questionnaire was completed to examine the comprehensibility, coherence, effectiveness, and reliability of the questionnaire before it was sent. To do this, there were 10 English-majored sophomores and 10 English-majored seniors who randomly requested to make these questions in order to ensure their reliability. After checking, the outcome showed that $\alpha = 0.95$, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable and can be delivered to collect official data. Their feedback was an invaluable contribution in ensuring the correctness and understandability of the questions, simultaneously in helping the revision and accomplishment of the questionnaire's perfect version.

The questionnaire is translated to Vietnamese so that participants can fully understand the questions because there are various participants with different capacities joining the survey. Next, the researchers sent the official questionnaire created by Google Form to respondents. The questionnaire was distributed and finished to synthesise the data in one week. The present study took advantage of the Statistic Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software (version 20) to categorize and analyze the questionnaire data after gaining a certain amount of the survey participants' responses. Microsoft Office Word was used to adjust and design tables for the data used.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1 Findings

Table 4.1: The reliability of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.886	22

The study's questionnaire was designed suitably to gather participants' responses to CI strategies. The final result indicates that Cronbach's Alpha of questions reached 0.886, higher than 0.6, which is an acceptable level and gets a good usability scale. It means that the questionnaire is credible.

4.1.1 English majors' frequently used CI strategies

According to Table 4.2, the most applied strategies are those for improving understanding, with $M = 3.67$ and $SD = 0.48$. The second place is strategies for urgent cases with $M = 3.63$ and $SD = 0.59$. Meanwhile, conditioned strategies based on the source text and conditioned strategies based on the target text have the same rank, with $M = 3.54$ and $SD = 0.55$. The last place on the list belongs to repair strategies, with $M = 3.46$ and $SD = 1.02$. These indicate that students majoring in English most often use the strategies for improving understanding, and the least often use the strategy of repair.

Table 4.2: English majors' frequently used CI strategies

Strategies	Mean	SD	Rank
Strategies for improving understanding	3.67	.48	1
Strategies for urgent cases	3.63	.59	2
Conditioned strategies based on the source text	3.54	.55	3
Conditioned strategies based on the target text	3.54	.55	3
Strategy of repair	3.46	1.02	4

4.1.2 English majors' use of each CI strategy category

4.1.2.1 Strategies for improving understanding

Table 4.3: Use of strategies for improving understanding

Strategies	Mean	SD	Rank
Anticipation	3.87	.79	1
Taking advantage of cohesive and coherent devices in the SL	3.85	.77	2
Inferencing	3.76	.64	3
Preparing	3.72	.83	4
Stalling	3.55	.87	5
Skipping	3.55	.97	6
Guessing	3.54	.90	7
Personal association and involvement	3.53	.87	8

Based on the responses of participants, the table shows that the average frequency of English majors using strategies for improving understanding ranges from 3.53 to 3.87. In particular, the anticipation strategy is the most frequently applied one ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.79$), and the personal association of involvement strategy is the least employed one ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.87$). Furthermore, the distinctive use of the remaining six strategies, consisting of taking advantage of cohesive and coherent devices in the SL, inferencing, preparing, stalling, skipping, and guessing, is also significant ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.77$; $M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.64$; $M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.83$; $M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.97$; $M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.90$). It shows that most English majors think that the anticipation strategy positively affects SL comprehension instead of the others.

4.1.2.2 Conditioned strategies based on the source text

Table 4.4: Use of conditioned strategies based on the source text

Strategies	Mean	SD	Rank
Transformation	3.53	.83	1
Word-for-word translation	3.35	.96	2

As a result of Table 4.4, the average frequency of English majors using conditioned strategies based on the source text ranges from 3.53 to 3.35. Namely, transformation is the most frequently used strategy ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.83$). On the contrary, word-for-word translation is the least frequently used strategy ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.96$). These data indicate that the transformation strategy is prioritised to use in the CI procedure.

4.1.2.3 Conditioned strategies based on the target text

Table 4.5: Use of conditioned strategies based on the target text

Strategies	Mean	SD	Rank
Adaptation	3.81	.87	1
Reproduction	3.59	.92	2
Addition	3.56	.71	3
Visualization	3.55	.97	4
Explicitation	3.51	.78	5
Using formulaic expression	3.24	.96	6

Table 4.5 shows that the average frequency of English majors using conditioned strategies based on the target text ranges from 3.24 to 3.81. The table also demonstrates that the most commonly utilized strategy is adaptation one ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.87$). Besides, the least commonly utilized strategy is using formulaic expression one ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.96$). The difference between the others, including reproduction, addition, visualization, and explicitation strategy, is substantial ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.92$; $M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.71$; $M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.97$; $M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.78$). This proves that student interpreters also use these strategies in this type but not as often as the adaptation strategy.

4.1.2.4 Strategies for urgent cases

Table 4.6: Use of strategies for urgent cases

Strategies	Mean	SD	Rank
Approximation	3.85	.89	1
Informing the client of an interpreting problem	3.65	.78	2
Substitute	3.57	.82	3
Offering an alternative translation in a parallel structure	3.54	.84	4
Compression	3.52	.80	5

Table 4.6 shows that the average frequency of English majors using strategies for urgent cases ranges from 3.52 to 3.85. It shows that approximation is the most regularly used tactic ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.89$), and compression is the least frequently used tactic ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.80$). The dissimilarity of the other three tactics, which are informing the client of an interpreting problem, substituting, and offering an alternative translation in a parallel structure, is considerable ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.78$; $M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.82$; $M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.84$). The data shows that these strategies are quite frequently applied in CI practice; however, their frequencies are less than the approximation one.

4.1.2.5 Strategy of repair

Table 4.7: Use of strategy of repair

Strategies	Mean	SD
Not repairing information unless it is critical	3.46	1.02

Table 4.7 points out that English majors tend to use the strategy of repair with $M = 3.46$ and $SD = 1.02$. This data shows that participants quite often use this strategy for their consecutive interpretation during the courses.

4.1.3 The differences in frequently used CI strategies among English majors with respect to their academic year

Table 4.8: The differences in frequently-used CI strategies among English majors with respect to their academic year

Students	N	Total Mean of Strategies	SD
Sophomores	40	3.53	.59
Seniors	40	3.57	.49

An independent T-test was performed to determine the differences in commonly employed CI strategies among English majors based on the academic year. $Sig. = 0.717 > 0.05$, showing that there is no significant difference in mean between the two groups. In other words, no difference in frequently used CI strategies exists between the two groups of sophomores and seniors. In particular, the average value of strategy for the second-year student group is 3.53 in Table 4.8 and 3.57 for the final-year student group. In reality, these two values are not dissimilar.

4.2 Discussion

The study's goal is to determine the CI methods that are frequently used by English majors as well as the most popular CI strategies among English majors based on their academic year. Furthermore, when compared to earlier studies, the current study's findings reveal some similarities and differences.

4.2.1 English majors' frequently used CI strategies

To start with, the researchers discovered that, in keeping with the most commonly used tactics, English majors tended to choose techniques for boosting understanding rather than the other strategy categories. This group's anticipation strategy received the highest average frequency of scale. This suggests that the majority of participants used this method regularly while practicing CI to help them understand the SL.

This study differs significantly from the survey results of Dong *et al.* (2019), which revealed that students prioritize explicitation, which is thought to help improve SL comprehension, over anticipation of the same type (Type-A strategies). In this regard, Afrina and Ardi (2021) indicated that the highest score, at around 28.87%, belonged to the explicitation approach and acknowledged the explicitation technique, making interpreters clearer.

Besides, taking advantage of cohesive and coherent devices in the SL is the second tactic trusted to be applied in CI by English majors. This means that students are more likely to use this strategy to achieve SL comprehension behind the anticipation strategy. Nonetheless, this finding varies from Dong *et al.* (2019)'s earlier data, which revealed that student interpreters are not interested in applying this method in all stages of the survey. According to the statistics, the strategy ranked sixth at Stage 1 and eighth at Stage 2 out of a total of 11 Type-A tactics. This highlights that students considered this method less helpful in achieving a precise interpretation. And, the point is opposed to the current study's findings.

In terms of the tactics that were the least often utilized, the latest results revealed that the repair strategy was disliked more than the other techniques. In other words, a portion of participants did not use the method of not repairing information unless it is critical. This corresponds to Li's (2015) data, which claimed that there were 1 of 405 overall frequencies of use, accounting for 0.3 of 100% for this type. Nevertheless, this method was included in the group of tactics that aid in the transmission of messages to the audience (Li, 2015). Afrina and Ardi (2021) discovered that 2.4% preferred this strategy for interpreting practice. In comparison to the other tactics suggested for investigation, the number is very modest, and this indicates that just a few students employed this strategy during the interpretation. Additionally, the survey by Dong *et al.* (2019) confirmed that this method was not often used, with the last rank in a total of seven Type-B strategies, and its average frequency stayed unchanged across the two stages of the investigation. That is, students acknowledged that the method of not repairing information unless it is critical is unnecessary for strengthening the SL's understanding at Stage 2.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the formulaic expression approach of conditioned strategies based on the target text was not evaluated as the most frequently applied, it was chosen to be used in the CI process. Many earlier studies either did not mention this method in examinations (Afrina & Ardi, 2021; Li, 2015; Kuswoyo & Audina, 2020) or mentioned it with no data from respondents (Dong *et al.*, 2019). This is valued as new data for future investigations.

4.2.2 The differences in frequently-used CI strategies among English majors with respect to their academic year

According to the results, both sophomores and seniors often used strategies for improving understanding, including inferencing, anticipation, preparing, stalling, guessing, skipping, taking advantage of cohesive and coherent devices in the SL, and association and involvement with the others. In addition, strategies for urgent cases, such as compression, substitute, approximation, informing the client of an interpreting problem, and offering an alternative translation in parallel, were the most regularly employed ones. While conditioned strategies based on the target text including adaptation, reproduction, addition, visualization, explicitation, using formulaic expression, and strategy of repair with not repairing information unless it is critical, as well as conditioned strategies based on the source text consisting of transformation and word-for-word translation, were appreciated as the least common ones used. These findings indicate that both groups often employ the same type of CI strategies to increase their understanding and the quality of interpretation.

Reminding the two groups of participants with interpreting strategies, the findings are a little variant from the results of Arumí Ribas (2012) that revealed there were several strategies that both advanced and novice students had in the joint when it came to solving problems during interpreting. However, Arumí Ribas (2012) said that advanced students employed a broader set of tactics that helped them solve a more significant number of issues than beginners, while this present study showed the different viewpoint that both sophomores and seniors are the same in applying the CI strategies.

5. Conclusion

The current study attempted to identify the most frequently used methods in CI practices by English majors at TVU, as well as the differences between the most frequently used tactics of two teams of participants. The final research showed that English-majored students prefer employing techniques to advance their grasp of others, while the category of repair strategy was least concerned. Also, seniors demonstrated that they had better knowledge and expertise after finishing all of the oral courses with the two types of tactics frequently used, which are those for boosting understanding and those for emergencies. Even though there was only one sort of regular strategy for sophomores, they were similar to seniors in terms of how frequently they used the methods for boosting comprehension. Not only that, but both groups of English majors indicated a difference in the tactics used the least frequently. Seniors, in particular, used the repair technique infrequently, whereas sophomores were conditioned tactics based on the source text of the same work. As a result, there is a disparity between diverse individuals at different training phases in terms of CI strategy consciousness.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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