



DOI: 10.22144/ctu.jen.2023.002

Students' perceptions of using note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments

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Article info.

Received 23 Oct 2022

Revised 28 Oct 2022

Accepted 29 Oct 2022

Keywords

Consecutive interpreting assignments, note-taking

ABSTRACT

Note-taking is critical in helping interpreters memorize detailed information both quickly and accurately. Therefore, the present study was conducted as a questionnaire survey at a university in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam to investigate how students, specifically student interpreters, perceive note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments. In detail, this study explores the students' perceptions of the benefits and the challenges of using note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments. The participants in this study comprised 160 students majoring in English Interpretation and Translation. Furthermore, they have taken consecutive interpreting courses and experienced taking notes in consecutive interpreting tasks. The findings of this study indicated that most students had good perceptions about note-taking used in consecutive interpretation and perceived its benefits and challenges. Moreover, some pedagogical implications for both students and teachers are made. Specifically, the study suggests that students should frequently practice it to acquire good note-taking skills. Teachers should make effective lecture designs to help students improve their note-taking skills and consecutive interpreting performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, due to the existence of multiple languages and the demand for communication, it is evident that interpretation plays a vital role in helping people communicate with one another easily. Wilson and Bruce (2016) once stated that there is no alternative to help people who do not share the same language communicate with each other except through interpretation.

The concept of interpretation has appeared for a long time. However, there is no evidence of when exactly the use of interpretation started (Biamah, 2013) besides the fact that in the past, to exchange goods, negotiate or threaten each other, neighboring tribes and countries had to communicate with each other. Therefore, those who were good at one or

more foreign languages except for their mother tongue were bound to act as interpreters (Qiang, 2013; Sofer, 2006). Because of those needs, interpretation has been widely used as a crucial tool for communication worldwide and has become an indispensable part of the job market.

Interpretation can be divided into two main kinds based on the circumstances where the interpreting process occurs: simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting (Nolan, 2005). These two types of interpreting differ in how the interpreter conveys messages. Expressly, in consecutive interpreting, the message is transmitted between chunks of the speech to be interpreted. In contrast, in simultaneous interpreting, the message is interpreted simultaneously when the original speech is made. However, consecutive interpretation has

been widely used for a long time because it can be performed anywhere and in any situation without the support of electronic devices such as booths, microphones, and headphones like the other kind of interpreting.

Due to the importance of consecutive interpreting and its popularity, more and more students wish to take interpreter training courses at the university level in Vietnam. Every year, a considerable number of students choose to study English Interpretation and Translation (EI&T) major at many well-known universities in order to become professional interpreters and translators. However, since consecutive interpreting is complex, most student interpreters will likely encounter many challenges during their training. For example, one of the most common problems interpreters face is dealing with their memory capacity, particularly their short-term memory. In interpreting, they usually have trouble memorizing detailed information such as numbers, time, and locations. Therefore, to deal with this issue, many memory-supporting techniques have been applied. Of the memory assistant strategies, note-taking is commonly used and widely considered influential in memorizing information during consecutive interpretation (Sheng, 2017). Note-taking can be regarded as writing down some keywords, main ideas, abbreviations, and symbols that depend on the note-taker's style while listening to the original speech delivered by the speaker. Because of its benefits, several studies in this field have been conducted lately all over the world (Marani & Tabrizi, 2018; Chen, 2016).

Although student interpreters find it beneficial to their memory, it is inevitable for them to face some challenges in the note-taking process. As a result, it is critical to be aware of both the benefits and challenges of note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments. Student interpreters can take advantage of it and look for practical solutions to improve their consecutive interpreting performances. However, there has been little research on this field in the Vietnamese context. As a result, this study investigates students' perceptions of using note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Consecutive Interpretation

Theoretically, consecutive interpreting (hereafter CI), known as conference interpreting, is considered the process of interpreting in which the interpreter

interprets right after the speaker has finished one or more ideas in the source language (SL) (Russell, 2005). Furthermore, CI also means that the consecutive interpreters (hereafter CIs) listen to what the speaker says and then reproduces the same message in another language only after a pause from the speaker (Russell & Takeda, 2015). According to Obler (2012), CI is one of the most complicated language processing tasks. In particular, Dong et al. (2018) used to claim that in the interpreting process, the CIs are required to listen to a stretch of a message or idea that the speaker wants to express in the SL and then try to recall the message or view as precisely as possible in another language. These perspectives suggest that CI is a sophisticated language processing task that only occurs when the speaker has completed a few connected sentences or a reasonably long paragraph. It is a challenging but interesting activity from both cognitive and linguistic points of views.

CI is widely used in various settings because the CIs can perform their job everywhere without well-equipped booths or complicated wiring systems vital to the other kind of interpreting (Lu, 2013). Moreover, according to Russell and Takeda (2015), CI is suitable for face-to-face dialogues and international meetings where the number of participants is relatively small. For example, CI is usually utilized in global conferences, press conferences, academic seminars, after-dinner speeches, business meetings, and patient-doctor sessions (Kohn & Albl-Mikasa, 2002). Furthermore, CI may take place in settings where sensitive issues are discussed, such as diplomatic or political meetings, legal proceedings, courtrooms, and a variety of other face-to-face settings (Russell & Takeda, 2015).

2.2. Note-taking

Seleskovitch (1968) considered note-taking as a memory aid that allows practitioners to recall what they heard. Besides, notes are made while simultaneously listening to the source material, so notes are known as their written condensations. Note-taking is also a memory-supporting tool involving the process of receiving and producing a notation text (Michaela, 2008). Furthermore, note-taking is regarded as a cognitively demanding activity in which pieces of information are systematically recorded by writing them down. Peverly and Wolf (2019) also believed that note-taking is a form of writing containing written information for others to read. The reasons why

people take notes are varied. Several researchers noted that the primary function of note-taking is to collect information delivered in multiple circumstances, such as classrooms, trials, boardrooms, and interpretations that must be memorized (Hartley, 1976; Kiewra, 1989). According to Thiéry (1981), the ultimate purpose of taking notes is to reduce the processing process as much as possible. Individuals also want to take notes to enhance memory performance and provide a brief record of information. From all of the perspectives above, note-taking can be defined as a memory-supporting technique that refers to writing down essential information needed to be remembered, whilst listening to one or several source materials.

Additionally, note-taking is a sophisticated task that includes understanding, selecting necessary information, and reproducing it in written form (Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Note-taking is also defined as selecting and transcribing essential information in an individual style of writing to memorize and use later. Generally, note-taking can be distinguished into two main stages: transcription and notes review. To take good notes, note-takers must have reasonable interpretation and transcription skills. They must be good at generating ideas and recording them fast. In reviewing notes, the note-takers must have linguistic skills and background knowledge to understand what has been written and add additional information.

2.3. Classifications of CI

Theoretically, CI is divided into two main types based on the purpose of a given communicative event. These are CI for dialogic face-to-face communication between two parties and CI for monologic one-to-many communication with little interaction with the audience. In particular, the first category of CI means that the interpreter typically works with two people who do not understand the other's language. The process of CI takes place among these three. Precisely, the interpreter conveys what the first person said to the other person in the listener's language. Turning to the second category of CI, it is often used at international conferences or seminars where people come from various parts of the world with different cultures and backgrounds. In this case, the interpreter works not only with the speaker but also with the audience. No matter which kind of CI the CIs have to deal with, they must be linguistically competent and good at switching languages (Nida,

1964). Furthermore, due to the complexity and difficulty of CI tasks, the CIs must master language skills, acquire general knowledge and deal with unexpected problems which may arise during their task to achieve a reasonable interpretation.

2.4. Stages of CI Process

Dam (1996) claimed that there were two stages during the process of CI. These are reception (where the CIs listen to the original discourse in the SL) and production (where the CIs convey the discourse in the target language (TL)). However, Jones (2002) divided CI into four phases: listening, comprehending, analyzing and re-expressing. However, this current study adapted the framework developed by Vuai (2017), including the three main stages: comprehension of the meaning, deverbalization and re-expression of the meaning.

Comprehension of the meaning: At this phase, the CIs listen to the original speech and comprehend its meaning. After that, they must utilize their cognitive knowledge to decode the speech. Therefore, this stage plays a critical role in the process of CI. The CIs might interpret the wrong message the speaker is trying to convey if they do not understand the speech. As a result, to do a good job, the CIs must have excellent listening skills and comprehension. In a nutshell, comprehension of the meaning is the first, but essential step to help the CIs achieve the accuracy of the interpretation, avoid going off track and ensure the quality of the interpretation.

Deverbalization: This stage is also known as correspondence which means that at this step, the CIs have to separate the meaning of the discourse from its language form and then immediately find the corresponding language form in their "mother tongue". This allows the CIs to keep in their mind the meaning that they fully understood in the form of non-language consciousness and then quickly move to the final stage. According to Seleskovitch (1968), deverbalization is regarded as a crucial step in the process of the CI because meanings cannot be extracted, and the CI task cannot be completed without this phase.

Re-expression of the meaning: Re-expression or reformulation means that the CIs are supposed to find out the best ways to express or convey the sense of the original wording and idioms being divorced from the SL, which has to be as appropriate as possible to the usage and cultures of the TL. Therefore, it is an essential phase for the CIs to achieve a good interpretation. This stage requires

the CIs to be good at both SL and TL. Furthermore, they need to be creative, quick-witted, and deeply understand the cultures of both SL and TL to achieve great accuracy of interpretation. In a nutshell, CIs cannot render the original speech in another language without this crucial step.

2.5. Benefits of note-taking in CI

Note-taking is considered a useful tool that allows the interpreter to recall the original speech (Gillies, 2013). Therefore, most CIs prefer to use it as a memory technique to support their CI performance. For instance, Jie and Chaolun (2004) once emphasized the benefits of note-taking in CI through his own experience. Here are several advantages of using note-taking during the process of CI:

Reducing memory burden: As stated earlier, note-taking is defined as a memory aid; therefore, it is believed that the primary use of note-taking is to reduce memory burden. Lin (2004) pointed out that interpreters can support their short-term memory using the note-taking technique. This is because taking notes during the process of CI can help the CIs reduce the tremendous amount of information needed to be memorized, which in turn allows the CIs to reduce the intensity of memory effort. No matter how competent and professional the CIs are, they cannot deal with lengthy speeches without note-taking. This is because note-taking can help them avoid being overloaded quickly by minimizing exceptionally detailed information such as numbers, dates, proper names, ages, and locations which needs to be memorized (Mahmoodzadeh, 1992). By writing down keywords in the original message, the CIs need to review their notes and interpret them accurately in the TL. Cutting down information that needs to be remembered helps the CIs perform their job over a long period without being tired and becoming stressed.

Ensuring accuracy: To ensure the quality of the interpretation, the CIs have to ensure that they accurately interpret what the speaker says. Several critical points, such as numbers, proper names, new terms, dates, and locations, may be delivered by the speaker during the CI. However, it is pretty tricky for the CIs to memorize all of them exactly. As a result, to achieve accuracy of the interpretation, the CIs are supposed to take notes. Note-taking can help the CIs quickly and accurately interpret main points and detailed information. In other words, it is necessary to take notes during the process of CI because it helps to ensure the accuracy of the

interpretation, which leads to a good interpretation (Luo & Ma, 2019).

Minimizing the CIs' effort: One of the essential benefits of note-taking is reducing the interpreters' effort in the production stage (Gillies, 2009). Without the support of note-taking, the CIs must handle many tasks in a short period. Due to dealing with multiple tasks, they can feel overloaded, stressed, and exhausted quickly. Under high pressure, the CIs may not perform well and face mental issues after the interpretation. Therefore, the CIs need to use the note-taking technique because it helps them minimize their effort during the CI process, especially in the production phase. Thanks to note-taking, it takes less time for them to recall the original message. Thus, the CIs can have more time to consider the best way to express the speech in the TL.

Avoiding missing important information: The CIs must interpret sufficiently, yet only memory is not adequate to maintain all of the detailed information (Mahmoodzadeh, 1992). In fact, during the long CI, a vast amount of information can be delivered to be interpreted. The CIs, therefore, may miss some crucial information if they depend only on their memory capacity (Li, 2010). In order to ensure the adequacy of the interpretation, the CIs can write down some main ideas or hard-to-remember information. Although they can ask the speakers to repeat their idea, it is time-consuming, and some speakers can get angry at the delay or do not even remember what they just said. In this case, note-taking may be the best way to help the CIs avoid missing information in their interpretation, supporting them in improving the quality of interpretation.

Enhancing the quality of the CI performance: Hanh (2006) once claimed that note-taking was an effective and beneficial tool for the interpreter working consecutively. In detail, note-taking can support the improvement of the quality of the CI performance by helping the CIs become more confident in performing their work. Additionally, note-taking can facilitate the analysis of the original speech by enhancing the interpreters' attention during listening comprehension.

2.6. Challenges of note-taking in CI

Although note-taking is regarded as a memory-supporting technique that is useful for the process of CI, there are still several issues that the CIs may encounter as they take notes during the CI process.

Obstructing the interpreter's listening and attention: To interpret something, the CIs first have to comprehend the meaning of the original speech by intentionally listening to it. However, it is challenging for them to listen to all of the information to be interpreted while taking notes, even though they have excellent listening comprehension skills. When taking notes, the CIs are required to simultaneously deal with many tasks such as listening to the speech, understanding its meaning, picking up key points, writing down some essential words in a short form that is easy to retrieve, and then continuing to listen to the subsequent information. Therefore, note-taking can divert the CIs' attention from listening (Gile, 2009). Since the CIs often try to write down too many words, they may not hear the rest of the speech. Consequently, this leads the CIs to be unable to accurately analyze and comprehend the original speech to convey it in another language.

Difficulty in understanding their own notes: One of the most common problems that the CIs have to deal with when taking notes in CI is that they do not even understand their notes to accomplish the interpreting task. For instance, due to the lack of note-taking skills and experiences, the CIs cannot decipher what they wrote in their notes. In this case, note-taking can be considered an "evil" (Lu, 2013) that prevents the CIs from recalling information to be interpreted. Therefore, they must practice taking notes regularly based on Rozan (1956) seven principles. However, it takes much time and effort for the CIs to acquire. Furthermore, they should develop their notes instead of using others' note-taking systems because they can recognize and decipher what they write more efficiently. All in all, the CIs have to find their own solution to this issue because they cannot perform their job without understanding what they need to interpret.

Being over-dependent on notes: As the CIs depend too much on their notes, they can have trouble working in difficult circumstances where they cannot take notes. Once the CIs overuse note-taking in their CI assignments, they may lose their confidence and memory skills which are essential to succeed in the interpreting task. Furthermore, they even cannot perform the task without taking notes. However, note-taking is only a means which facilitates the CI (Viezzi, 2013). Therefore, to successfully perform CI, the CIs should consider note-taking as only a memory aid used to support their assignments.

Difficulty in taking good notes: Sometimes, CIs can be interfered with recalling original information if they do not know how to take notes. In other words, taking notes based on experiences may not help them retrieve information precisely. Inappropriate notes can lead the CIs to get confused about the message that the speaker wants to convey. Therefore, they cannot interpret strictly and faithfully. It is not easy to take good notes unless they invest time practicing. Consequently, learning to take notes and practice them frequently is necessary.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative design to investigate students' perceptions of using note-taking in CI assignments. Moreover, this study focused on surveys with closed-ended questions. A survey is a research method used for gathering a particular group of people by asking closed-ended questions. Although closed-ended questions give limited insights, they can be easily collected and analyzed for quantitative data.

3.2. Research Instrument

In order to explore students' perceptions of using note-taking in CI assignments, a questionnaire was developed. In recent years, questionnaires have been widely considered a comparatively cost-effective tool to collect a massive amount of information in a short period (Cresswell, 2012). It can also help participants show their honest opinions in a more accessible manner. Furthermore, the data analysis can be consistent and coherent by using questionnaires (Malhotra et al., 2006). Therefore, a questionnaire with available statements was used in this study to answer the two research questions.

Generally, the questionnaire was divided into three main parts: A, B, and C. Part A encompassed the introduction of the researchers' background, the introduction and purpose of the study, and the definition of note-taking in CI to ensure that all of the participants had a complete understanding of the study and the questionnaire. Part B included five clusters asking for background information about the participants. Part C consisted of 34 closed-ended questions aiming to examine the participants' opinions on the benefits and challenges of using note-taking during the process of CI. More specifically, according to the two main research questions, 34 items were divided into two sections to find answers for each research question. Since

these two research questions were independently designed in the questionnaire, the ordinal number of items in each research question was separate. In detail, the first section contained 20 items intending to investigate the respondents' perceptions of the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments. These 20 items were separated into five clusters following the five benefits mentioned earlier and

numbered from 1 to 20. The other one included 14 items about the participants' perceptions of the challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments. These 14 items were numbered from 1 to 14 and divided into four clusters according to the challenges presented in the literature review. Part C of the questionnaire is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The questionnaire

Benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments		
Cluster 1	Reducing memory burden	Item 1-4
Cluster 2	Ensuring accuracy	Item 5-7
Cluster 3	Minimizing the CIs' effort	Item 8-14
Cluster 4	Avoiding missing important information	Item 15-16
Cluster 5	Enhancing the quality of the CI performance	Item 17-20
Challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments		
Cluster 1	Obstructing the interpreter's listening and attention	Item 1-4
Cluster 2	Difficulty in understanding their own notes	Item 5-7
Cluster 3	Being over dependent on notes	Item 8-10
Cluster 4	Difficulty in taking good notes	Item 11-14

Depending on the 5-point Likert-scale format, the participants freely showed their opinions on each item by choosing one appropriate scale among five points (namely 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) in the matter of how strongly they agree or disagree with the given items. Besides, the questionnaire was designed in two parallel languages: English and Vietnamese, to ensure that all of the students participating in this research could completely understand each item.

3.3. Participants

This research was conducted with the participation of 160 students, including 136 females and 24 males. They all major in EI&T at a higher education institution in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Since all participants have studied CI courses and used to take notes to support their CI tasks, they were invited to participate in this study.

3.4. Procedures

After being designed, the questionnaire was piloted to check its reliability. A group of 30 English-major students voluntarily participated in the questionnaire. Their responses were gathered and tested for reliability through Cronbach's alpha (α). The data collected from the questionnaire in this study were tested for reliability, and the result showed that the Cronbach's alpha was at the level of a reasonable scale ($\alpha = .81$). Therefore, it could be confirmed that the questionnaire employed in this research was reliable.

After piloting the questionnaire and testing for its reliability had been finished, the questionnaire was adjusted and ready to be distributed to the 160 participants. The questionnaire was then sent to the participants through Google Forms. The number completed questionnaires reached 160 within one week. Consequently, the collected data were reviewed and analyzed.

3.5. Data Analysis

In this study, the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed using the program Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The responses from 34 items applying the Five-point Likert scale were all converted into numbers (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The other items, including gender, age, major, and course, were also recorded into numbers and input into SPSS to be analyzed. The researchers used SPSS with reliability and descriptive statistics tests in this research. Frequency distribution and percentage count were also employed to analyze the results. Ultimately, the study's findings were shown in percentage and arithmetic means.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Students' perceptions towards the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments

Concerning the first research question, "What are students' perceptions towards the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments?" the results were divided into detailed subdivisions based on the benefits. The overall result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students’ perceptions towards the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Reducing memory burden	1.00	5.00	3.81	.90
Ensuring accuracy	1.00	5.00	3.94	.88
Minimizing the CIs’ effort	1.00	5.00	3.55	.57
Avoiding missing important information	1.00	5.00	3.89	.77
Enhancing the quality of the CI performance	1.00	5.00	3.84	.63

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of students’ perceptions of the five benefits of note-taking in CI assignments are all relatively high (M>3.40). This implies that the participants positively perceived the benefits of note-taking used during the CI process. Specifically, “Ensuring accuracy” gets the highest mean score (M=3.94), while the lowest goes to

“Minimizing the CIs’ effort” (M=3.55). “Avoiding missing important information” also gets a very high mean score (M=3.89), followed by “Enhancing the quality of the CI performance” (M=3.84), and then “Reducing memory burden” (M=3.81). The following tables present a specific analysis of students’ perceptions of the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments.

Table 3. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the memory burden in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1 Note-taking increases my short-term memory.	6.3	15.6	78.1
2 Note-taking helps me relax my mind during the consecutive interpreting process.	25.6	39.4	35
3 Note-taking helps me avoid getting overloaded quickly during the consecutive interpreting process.	4.4	15	80.7
4 Note-taking reduces my pressure because I usually have to memorize too much information.	7.5	9.4	83.1
Total:	10.95	19.85	69.23

In terms of reducing memory burden, Table 3 indicates that the percentage of agreement is relatively high (69.23%). Specifically, the highest percentages of agreement go to Item 4 and Item 3, with 83.1% and 80.7%, respectively, because the students believed note-taking could reduce their pressure and help them avoid overloading quickly

during the CI process. Besides, 78.1% agreed that note-taking could increase their short-term memory (Item 1). Unexpectedly, 39.4% of students had no idea about Item 2, “Note-taking helps me relax my mind during the consecutive interpreting process.” To sum up, students can reduce their memory burden by taking advantage of note-taking.

Table 4. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the interpretation accuracy in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
5 Note-taking allows me to accurately memorize detailed information such as dates, numbers, locations, and so on.	4.4	11.3	84.4
6 Note-taking helps me to recall the original information accurately.	6.9	26.9	66.3
7 Note-taking helps me faithfully and accurately convey the speaker’s message in the target language.	8.7	23.8	67.5
Total:	6.67	20.67	72.73

A large proportion of respondents (72.73%) agreed that note-taking could help them ensure accuracy during the CI process. As can be seen, the majority of students (84.4%) supposed that “Note-taking allows them to accurately memorize detailed information such as dates, numbers, locations, and so on” (Item 5). Item 7, “Note-taking helps me faithfully and accurately convey the speaker’s

message in the target language,” and Item 6, “Note-taking helps me recall the original information accurately,” also receive much agreement, with a percentage of 67.5 and 66.3, respectively. Consequently, these percentages prove that the students benefited from note-taking to ensure accuracy.

Table 5. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the CIs’ effort in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
8 Note-taking minimizes my effort of memory during the consecutive interpreting process.	35	23.1	41.9
9 Note-taking supports me to work over a long time without putting much effort.	33.2	31.9	35
10 Note-taking helps me handle a lot of tasks during the process of consecutive interpreting without putting much effort.	35.6	23.1	41.2
11 Note-taking reduces a huge amount of information that needs to be remembered.	21.3	18.8	60
12 Note-taking allows me to easily memorize detailed information such as dates, numbers, locations, and so on.	3.1	8.8	88.2
13 Note-taking helps me to recall the original information easily and quickly.	4.4	13.8	81.9
14 Note-taking helps me save time from recalling information.	5.6	16.3	78.1
Total:	19.74	19.4	60.9

In regards to minimizing the CIs’ effort, the percentage of agreement was much higher than that of disagreement, 60.9% and 19.74%, respectively. In particular, students who agreed that note-taking supports them to quickly memorizing detailed information such as dates, numbers, locations, and so on (Item 12) account for 88.2% of the total. In contrast, only 35% of respondents found that note-taking can help them work over a long time without much effort (Item 9). In addition, the percentages of disagreement and neutrality in Item 9 are high and nearly similar, with 33.2% and 31.9%, respectively. Significantly, Item 8, “*Note-taking minimizes my effort of memory during the consecutive interpreting*

process,” and Item 10, “*Note-taking helps me handle a lot of tasks during the process of consecutive interpreting without putting much effort,”* have similar percentages, with 41.9% and 41.2% respectively. The percentages of students among Item 11 “*Note-taking reduces a huge amount of information that needs to be remembered,”* Item 13 “*Note-taking helps me to recall the original information easily and quickly,”* and Item 14 “*Note-taking helps me save time from recalling information”* are also pretty high, ranging between 60% and 81.9%. In a nutshell, most students supposed that note-taking could minimize their effort while undertaking the CI.

Table 6. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the important information in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
15 Note-taking helps me avoid missing essential information to be interpreted.	6.3	8.1	85.6
16 Note-taking helps me sufficiently memorize all necessary information that needs to be interpreted.	11.3	26.3	62.6
Total:	8.8	17.2	74.1

Regarding avoiding missing important information, the percentage of agreement (74.1%) was higher than that of disagreement (8.8%) and neutrality (17.2%). As expected, most students (85.6%) agreed with Item 15 “*Note-taking helps me avoid missing essential information to be interpreted.”* Similarly,

more than 60% of them found that note-taking helps them to sufficiently memorize all necessary information that needs to be interpreted (Item 16). As a result, students perceive that avoiding missing important information is one of the essential benefits of note-taking.

Table 7. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the quality of the CI performance in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
17 Note-taking enhances the quality of the consecutive interpreting performance.	3.8	9.4	86.9
18 Note-taking helps me become more confident in performing the consecutive interpreting task.	4.4	20	75.7
19 Note-taking helps me improve my concentration during the consecutive interpreting.	18.1	21.9	60
20 Note-taking facilitates the analysis of the original speech.	9.4	24.4	66.3
Total:	8.93	18.93	72.23

Turning to the quality of the CI performance, many students (72.23%) believed that note-taking could enhance the quality of their CI performance. In detail, the percentage of respondents who agreed with Item 17, “*Note-taking enhances the quality of the consecutive interpreting performance,*” was the largest, at 86.9%, while the percentage of disagreement was merely 3.8%. Over three-quarters of students agreed that their CI performance may be improved because they can gain confidence in doing the CI task thanks to note-taking (Item 18). Item 19, “*Note-taking helps me improve my concentration during the consecutive interpreting,*” and Item 20, “*Note-taking facilitates the analysis of the original speech,*” also make up high percentages, rated at 60% and 66.3%, respectively. In summary, students believed that the quality of their CI performance could be enhanced by taking notes.

In a nutshell, the overall percentage of agreement was high in regards to the benefits of using note-taking in CI assignments, proving that the participants found note-taking beneficial for them in performing the CI assignments. However, they still had some “neutral” and “disagree” opinions on its benefits.

Regarding the benefits of note-taking in CI assignments, the research findings were highly positive. In detail, according to the studies by Lin (2014) and Mahmoodzadeh (1992), note-taking positively influences interpreters’ memory capacity, leading to the reduction of memory burden. As expected, the responses received from the questionnaire in this research showed the same idea. For instance, nearly 70% of the participants believed note-taking could help them reduce their memory burden. Due to the limitation of human memory, the participants perceived that using note-taking in the process of CI can increase their short-term memory, help them relax their minds a little bit, avoid them

being quickly overloaded, and reduce their stress and pressure.

Moreover, the findings in this study are similar to those of Luo and Ma (2019), which figured out that note-taking can help the CIs ensure the accuracy of the consecutive interpretation. Surprisingly, a considerable number of the students taking part in this study answered that they could accurately memorize detailed information such as dates, numbers, locations, etc., thanks to note-taking. Meanwhile, the questionnaire's two statements, “*Note-taking helps me to recall the original information accurately*” and “*Note-taking helps me faithfully and accurately convey the speaker’s message in the target language,*” unexpectedly received a slightly high percentage of neutrality. This demonstrates that although the participants consented that note-taking allows them to ensure the interpretation accuracy, some still are suspicious about this argument. However, through the high percentage of agreement, they believed that note-taking can ensure the accuracy of the interpretation, which proves that the research of Luo and Ma is still valid. In addition, Gillies (2009) once stated that note-taking could reduce the CIs’ effort; this study’s results had the same viewpoint as Gillies. Specifically, 60.9% of students answered that their effort during the CI task could be decreased thanks to note-taking.

By taking notes, the students could minimize their memory effort caused by memorizing too much information, such as incredibly detailed information, in a short period. This also helped them have more time to deal with other tasks during the process of CI. Note-taking might reduce a tremendous amount of information that needs to be remembered, making the CI performance less effort. Furthermore, many students admitted that note-taking could help them avoid missing necessary information to be interpreted, which mirrors the

result in Li’s study (2010). Detailed information such as places, times, and dates are complicated for the students to remember. It was also hard for them to memorize information when the speaker spoke very fast and when too much information was delivered. Therefore, most participants answered that note-taking is useful for sufficiently memorizing information. Ultimately, most students believed that the quality of their CI performance could be enhanced with note-taking, supporting the same findings from the research by Hanh (2006). Specifically, they figured out that note-taking facilitates the analysis of the original speech because they were always required to actively listen to the original speech, fully understand it and recognize the main ideas in order to take good notes. Their concentration was also improved, thanks to taking notes. Besides, they might feel more

confident in doing their job because they were no longer afraid of missing essential information that needs to be interpreted. In summary, student interpreters should take advantage of note-taking in CI because of its numerous benefits to enhancing CI performance.

4.2. Students’ perceptions towards the challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments

Turning to the second research question, “What are students’ perceptions towards the challenges of using note-taking in consecutive interpreting assignments?” the overall results are divided into four clusters depending on the challenges in Table 8.

Table 8. Students’ perceptions towards the challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Obstructing the interpreter’s listening and attention	1.00	5.00	3.46	0.81
Difficulty in understanding their own notes	1.00	5.00	3.55	0.67
Being over dependent on notes	1.00	5.00	3.55	0.68
Difficulty in taking good notes	1.00	5.00	3.55	0.68

Table 8 shows that the mean scores of students’ perceptions of the four challenges of note-taking in CI assignments are pretty high (M>3.40). In detail, the lowest mean score falls on “*Obstructing the interpreter’s listening and attention*” (M=3.46). As can be seen clearly in the Table, the three clusters,

which are “*Difficulty in understanding their own notes*,” “*Being overdependent on notes*,” and “*Difficulty in taking good notes*,” share the same mean score (M=3.55). In addition, the students’ opinions about each item from the four main challenges are shown explicitly as follows.

Table 9. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the interpreter’s listening and attention in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1 I find it difficult to take notes while listening to the source speech.	14.4	14.4	71.2
2 I find it difficult to hear the rest of the speech if I listen to the source speech and take notes at the same time.	14.4	17.5	68.1
3 Note-taking makes me miss some necessary information because I cannot hear the rest of the speech while taking notes.	23.2	27.5	49.4
4 Note-taking distracts my attention and concentration.	35	27.5	37.5
Total:	21.75	21.73	56.55

Regarding the problem of obstructing the CIs’ listening and attention, 56.55% of students found that note-taking distracts their listening and attention during the process of CI. More specifically, the vast majority (71.2%) found it challenging to take notes while listening to the source speech (Item 1). They also had trouble hearing the rest of the speech if they listened to the source speech and took notes at the same time (Item 2) (68.1%), leading them to miss necessary

information that needs to be interpreted (Item 3) (49.4%). However, Item 3 has slightly high disagreement and neutrality percentages, with 23.2% and 27.5%, respectively. Remarkably, the percentage of students who agreed that note-taking distracts their attention and concentration (Item 4) was quite similar to that of students who disagreed with that idea, with 37.5% and 35%, respectively. Ultimately, it is believed that note-taking takes away the CIs’ listening and attention.

Table 10. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the understanding their own notes in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
5 I find it difficult to understand my own notes.	7.5	6.9	85.6
6 I find it difficult to recall the original speech through my notes.	26.2	17.5	56.3
7 I spend much time in deciphering what I have written in my notes.	27.6	21.9	50.7
Total:	20.43	15.43	64.2

With respect to difficulty in understanding notes, the percentage of agreement was relatively high (64.2%). Specifically, the most significant percentage of agreement goes to Item 5, “*I find it difficult to understand my own notes,*” with 85.6%. Furthermore, 56.3% also found it challenging to

recall the original speech through their notes (Item 6). For item 7, “*I spend much time in deciphering what I have written in my notes,*” the percentage of agreement was nearly twice that of disagreement, reaching 50.7% and 27.6%, respectively. In short, they found it difficult to understand their own notes.

Table 11. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the dependence on notes in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
8 I always depend on note-taking when doing the consecutive interpretation.	15	20.6	64.4
9 I feel nervous when working at places where I cannot take notes.	13.2	28.1	58.7
10 I cannot sufficiently interpret without note-taking.	23.7	25	51.2
Total:	17.3	24.57	58.1

Concerning the issue of being over-dependent on notes, the percentage of agreement was not that high (58.1%), while nearly a quarter of students remained neutral on this issues. Unpredictably, 64.4% always depend on note-taking when undertaking the CI (Item 8). They also agreed that they may feel nervous when working in places where they cannot take notes (Item 9) (58.7%) and that they cannot

sufficiently interpret without note-taking (Item 10) (51.2%). Surprisingly, the number of participants who had a neutral opinion about these three items, including 8, 9, and 10, was fairly high, ranging between 20.6% and 28.1%. This illustrates that students agreed that they depend too much on notes during the CI process.

Table 12. The percentage of students’ perceptions towards the difficulty in taking good notes in the CI context

Items Statements	Percentage		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
11 I find it difficult to take good notes when the speaker speaks fast.	7.6	19.4	73.1
12 I find it difficult to take appropriate notes.	18.2	23.1	58.8
13 I find it difficult to pick up key points and main ideas in order to take notes.	25.6	26.3	48.2
14 I take notes based on my own experiences	26.9	21.9	82
Total:	19.58	22.68	65.53

Involving the difficulty of taking good notes, the percentage of agreement was somewhat high (65.53%). In detail, students who agreed with Item 14, “*I take notes based on my own experiences,*” constituted 82% of the total, which was the highest percentage of agreement. On the contrary, the lowest percentage of agreement went to Item 13 “*I find it difficult to pick up key points and main ideas in order to take notes.*” However, over half of the students disagreed and had no idea about this item. Remarkably, 73.1% of students consented that the speaker's speed influenced their note-taking ability

(Item 11). Students also found it difficult to take appropriate notes (58.8%). In short, students found it challenging to take good notes in the CI process.

Regarding the challenges of using note-taking in the CI process, the number one problem the students encountered was difficulty in understanding their own notes. This is because inappropriate notes prevent them from recalling the original piece of information. Moreover, they have to spend additional deciphering what was written in their notes. In addition, notes became useless and even

obstructed the CIs' performance if the CIs did not know how to take the right notes. As a result, difficulty in taking good notes was the second problem that most students encountered. Perhaps everyone knows how to take notes, but not many people know how to take appropriate notes. This was demonstrated through the participants' responses to the questionnaire. Many students found it difficult to take good notes when delivering a speech quickly. They also could not take appropriate notes because they found it difficult to pick up key points and the main ideas. This is why many people are aware of the benefits of note-taking used in the CI, but still decide not to utilize it. To deal with the two above issues, the students should follow the seven principles developed by Rozan (1956) to know how to take notes fully. According to Viezzi (2013), who stated that note-taking is just a means of supporting the CIs' memory, the findings in this study showed disagreement. Approximately three-fifths of students reported that they depended too much on note-taking. In detail, they admitted that they always depended on note-taking when making consecutive interpretations, because they could not sufficiently convey a message in another language in the absence of note-taking. They also said they might feel nervous and worried if they could not take notes to support their interpretation. This shows that student interpreters depended too much on note-taking, which is not ideal because the consecutive interpretation mainly requires memory instead of this memory-supporting aids. Therefore, it is suggested that note-taking should be used when necessary.

With regard to the final challenge, the findings are similar to Gile's (2009), which claimed that note-taking distracts the CIs' listening and attention. Over half of the participants agreed with this statement, because they found it difficult to hear the rest of the original speech if they listened to it and took notes simultaneously. This leads them to miss necessary information, which is unacceptable in the CI. This suggests that student interpreters need to improve their listening comprehension. However, no matter how good their listening skills are, it is not sure that they can avoid this problem. Therefore, to handle this issue, the CIs should practice it regularly, and it is better to take note-taking courses.

5. CONCLUSION

Note-taking plays an essential role in performing CI assignments. Depending on the research results, note-taking is considered an effective method of

memorizing information, which helps student interpreters perform their job well. In other words, it is beneficial for the CIs to use note-taking during the CI process, since it brings several advantages. Note-taking can support them in reducing their memory burden, ensuring accuracy, minimizing their effort, avoiding missing essential information, and enhancing the overall quality of the CI performance. However, everything has both strengths and limitations. It means that the student interpreters also have to confront many disadvantages when using note-taking in CI assignments. According to the findings in this study, it is challenging for them to take notes when making consecutive interpretations. Remarkably, most student interpreters find it challenging to take good notes because they have not been trained to become good note-takers and to take notes based on their own experiences and interests. Furthermore, they also had trouble deciphering what they had written in their notes, performing their job without note-taking, and taking notes while focusing on listening to the original speech. To sum up, understanding the benefits and challenges of the note-taking technique in CI tasks is the first, but critical step to improving the CI assignments since it helps the students understand what they need to do and pay attention to in their learning process and their practices as well.

6. IMPLICATIONS

The research findings were positive, proving that students are aware of the benefits and challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments. Thanks to its numerous benefits, students can use note-taking as an indispensable memory aid during the CI process. They should take action to learn the best way of taking notes through note-taking courses instead of depending on their own experiences. Firstly, they should learn to take notes by seeking functional materials on websites or libraries. They should learn simple ways to be familiar with note-taking. Specifically, they could use simple symbols and learn to write abbreviated words. In order to take good notes, the best choice for them is to follow the seven principles guide by Rozan. They will be trained to take notes step by step to make sure that the notes taken are appropriate and easy to be recalled. After being fluent in taking notes, they can create their way of taking notes. Besides, student interpreters must be excellent in listening comprehension, since listening and note-taking are intertwined. Acquiring good listening comprehension skills allows students to take notes

quickly. However, according to the findings of this study, students also face many challenges while taking notes in CI tasks. As a result, thanks to this research, they can recognize the problems they encounter in note-taking, helping them take care to avoid these issues and propose some effective note-taking strategies as well. Most importantly, students should keep in mind that note-taking is only a memory aid, so they should be aware of its benefits and drawbacks in order to take advantage of it in a proper manner and be able to avoid overlying on it too much.

This study is beneficial not only for students, but also for teachers. It cannot be denied that teachers play a crucial role in developing students' note-taking skills. Thanks to having a complete understanding of students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using note-taking in CI tasks, teachers can appropriately adjust their lectures and teaching materials to enhance students' CI performances. In detail, although it is often not enough time for teachers to teach multiple skills of CI to students in a class, they should sometimes apply some effective methods of note-taking to their lectures to help their students get used to the note-taking technique. Since most students perceive difficulty in taking good notes as the biggest challenge, teachers should figure out the best way to guide their students in taking improved notes during the CI process. In addition, they should provide their students with some valuable note-taking materials to help them freely practice and find their own way of taking notes. Students also found that they had trouble listening while taking notes; Therefore, in addition to educating students on how to take good notes, teachers should focus on their students' listening comprehension ability. They must spend more time practicing listening skills to ensure that their students can completely understand what the speaker says, which is the most important thing to be able to take good notes. Eventually, teachers should facilitate their students to practice note-taking skills in every CI assignment.

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Awareness of students' perceptions of using note-taking in CI assignments allows the university, especially school administrators and department heads, to support students' learning by providing a practical and attractive learning environment. In addition, this research allows school administrators to make appropriate strategies to support teachers in their teaching process.

7. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this study just focused on the benefits and challenges of using note-taking in the CI process, it could be improved if the researcher investigates some methods of note-taking to help the students know exactly how to take good notes and provide some strategies to help students deal with the disadvantages. Since this study focused merely on the benefits and challenges of using note-taking in CI assignments, other researchers must conduct some research on each aspect to understand each one. For example, a researcher can conduct a study to investigate a particular advantage or disadvantage of note-taking in CI tasks. Moreover, it would be ideal to have a study on the effects or the practice of using note-taking during the CI process. The researcher can also use other data collection methods, such as interviews and tests, to validate the data.

Due to limited time and the researchers' capacity, the questionnaire was only made to collect the data in this study. However, an interview should be conducted to ensure triangulation of the data. In addition, further studies need to be conducted in various universities and learning contexts in Vietnam to explore how students in different areas perceive this field.

The number of participants involved in this study was relatively small, so the findings would have been more interesting if more students had agreed to participate. Finally, other researchers should expand the respondents to generalize an overall conclusion applicable to all student interpreters.

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