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RESEARCH ARTICLE

English-Major Student Reflections on Challenges of Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation in an EFL Country

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ABSTRACT

Interpretation is a crucial skill for English-major students in EFL countries, particularly as they prepare for professional careers in language services. However, both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation have many difficulties, needing good cognitive, linguistic and memory skills. This study investigated students' perceived difficulty, cognitive load, memory, fluency, accuracy, effectiveness of training, language proficiency, and stress and coping strategies in both modes of interpretation. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from 125 English-major students through structured Likert-scale questionnaires and performance-based assessments. Statistical analyses, including t-tests and ANOVA, were conducted to identify gender and residence-based differences in interpretation challenges. The findings reveal that simultaneous interpretation is perceived as significantly more difficult than consecutive interpretation, with students reporting higher cognitive load, more significant mental fatigue, and fluency breakdowns under pressure. Difficulties in memory and note-taking appeared as consistent challenges of consecutive interpretation and stress, as well as confidence in one's own language capacity, affected overall performance. Gender analysis showed that female students rated their linguistic proficiency lower than male students despite similar performance levels. The study concludes that enhanced cognitive training, fluency-building exercises, stress management techniques, and earlier interpretation training in academic curricula can improve student interpreters' skills. The findings provide insights for developing curriculum and interpretation

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 16 M a r c h 2025 | Revised: 19 April 2025 | Accepted: 22 April 2025 | Published Online: 25 April 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i5.9544

CITATION

Van Vu, T., Bui Thi Kieu, G., Nguyen, A.N., 2025. English-Major Student Reflections on Challenges of Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation in an EFL Country. Forum for Linguistic Studies. 7(5): 242–254. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i5.9544

training programs in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Consecutive Interpretation; Cognitive Load; Interpretation Training; Linguistic Proficiency; Simultaneous Interpretation

1. Introduction

Interpretation is an essential skill in multilingual communication, facilitating the exchange of information across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries, the role of interpretation becomes even more significant as English serves as a global lingua franca for business, diplomacy, education, and international relations[1, 2]. In several EFL countries, students graduating with English majors want to become professional interpreters, whether as a sole career or a subsection of wider language-related professions. However, mastering interpretation is a complex and demanding task that requires linguistic proficiency, cognitive flexibility, memory retention, multitasking abilities, and real-time decision-making skills[3, 4]. Among the different modes of interpretation, consecutive interpretation (CI) and simultaneous interpretation (SI) are the two most commonly used methods. Consecutive interpretation involves the interpreter listening to a speech segment, taking notes, and then rendering the message into the target language after the speaker pauses[5]. This mode allows for a more structured and deliberate approach to interpretation, but it requires good memory or properties of aided notes or traceable meaning[6, 7]. In contrast, simultaneous interpretation is where interpreters listen and speak simultaneously without any delay in output, resulting in an ever-so-slight time gap between the stated source language and the final target language output[8]. This model is widely used in conferences, international meetings, and live events, but it demands exceptional concentration, rapid processing speed, and multitasking ability[9–11]. For English-major students in EFL countries, learning and mastering both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation pose considerable challenges. The lack of a fully immersive English-speaking environment can limit students' exposure to authentic spoken English, making it difficult for them to develop the required listening and processing skills[12, 13]. Moreover, both CI and SI place cognitive demands on students, which often leads to performance anxiety and mistakes, as well as breaking fluency and accuracy[14, 15]. These challenges rest upon multiple circumstances, such as vocabulary limitations, trouble dealing with accelerated speech, lack of well-structured note-taking techniques, and mental burden due to language processing in real time[16, 17].

Despite the growing demand for skilled interpreters, many students struggle with acquiring interpretation competencies, and there is a need to understand better the specific challenges they face[1]. While previous research has explored various aspects of interpretation, there is a lack of studies that quantitatively assess students' perceptions of difficulty in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation within EFL settings[18, 19]. Additionally, most studies focus on professional interpreters or examine CI and SI separately rather than comparing the two modes in an academic learning context[20, 21]. The primary objective of this study is to investigate and quantify the challenges faced by English-major students in an EFL country when performing consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. Specifically, the study aimed to examine students' perceptions of challenges in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation modes, analyze the cognitive load associated with each, and identify key factors influencing interpretation performance[10]. This study compared consecutive and simultaneous interpretation and identified which mode students find more challenging and the reasons such as memory retention, note-taking capacity, fluency, and accuracy[6, 22]. Additionally, the research examined the role of linguistic proficiency, cognitive capacity, prior training, and external factors - such as speech rate and stress - on interpretation performance[23, 24]. This quantitative study gives evidence-based insights that can help design more effective training programs on interpretation, ensuring that students gain the skills required to meet professional requirements. The following research questions sought to highlight the corpus of the study as follows.

1. What are the perceived difficulties faced by English-major students in EFL countries when performing consecutive and simultaneous interpretation?

2. How does cognitive load differ between consecutive

and simultaneous interpretation for student interpreters?

3. What is the relationship between linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance in both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation?

2. Literature Review

As a complex cognitive and linguistic act, interpretation has been of great interest to translation studies, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics. The role of interpreters in facilitating cross-linguistic communication is crucial, particularly in settings where English is not the primary language but is used as a lingua franca. Among the different modes of interpretation, consecutive and simultaneous interpretations present distinct challenges, each requiring a unique set of skills and cognitive strategies. This section reviews existing literature on interpretation challenges, cognitive load theories, note-taking strategies, fluency and accuracy in interpretation, and the impact of linguistic proficiency in EFL contexts.

Several theoretical models have been proposed to explain interpreters' challenges, particularly in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. According to Russell[19], the interpretation process involves three primary efforts: listening and analysis, memory, and production. Interpreters have to be able to listen to potentially lengthy segments of a speech, retain information in their short-term memory, take notes and then reproduce the message to a high degree of accuracy. Simultaneous interpretation, on the other hand, involves an additional effort of real-time production while listening, making it even more demanding. When cognitive resources are exceeded, errors, omissions, and hesitations occur. Another critical theory is the mental load theory proposed by Viezzi[8], which suggests that tasks requiring simultaneous processing of multiple information streams heavily burden working memory. Since simultaneous interpreters must listen and speak simultaneously, they often experience cognitive overload, which can decrease accuracy and fluency. Studies by Al-Harahsheh et al.[16] further emphasize that simultaneous interpretation involves managing divided attention between comprehension and speech production, making it one of the most cognitively challenging language-processing tasks.

Consecutive interpretation requires interpreters to retain information for extended periods before rendering speech in the target language. According to Bartłomiejczyk and Stachowiak-Szymczak[9], memory retention is one of the most significant difficulties that interpreters experience. Because the interpreter listens to longer speech segments before interpreting, they must rely on their short-term and long-term memory, as well as note-taking, to reproduce the message accurately[10]. Memory limitations often lead to information loss, distortions, or omissions, especially when dealing with complex or dense content. Another important component determining consecutive interpretation accomplishments is note-taking techniques. Pöchhacker[2] argues that effective note-taking is not merely transcription but rather an efficient system of symbols, abbreviations, and structures that help interpreters recall key concepts[15]. Research indicates that students without adequate training in note-taking have difficulty organizing their notes and rendered speech fails to make sense[23]. Moreover, the challenge of balancing listening, note-taking, and memory recall increases cognitive load, which can impact the accuracy and fluency of interpretation.

Simultaneous interpretation is considered more challenging due to the real-time processing demands placed on interpreters. Moser-Mercer et al.[20] highlighted that simultaneous interpreters encounter difficulties related to speech rate, overlapping speech, and complex syntax[20]. Simultaneous interpretation is so fast-paced that there is little time to reorder sentences or clarify meaning, and this is more likely to result in semantic errors. Pöchhacker[2] explains that one of the key difficulties in simultaneous interpretation is the management of processing time. If the interpreter lags too far behind the speaker, they may lose track of meaning or be forced to paraphrase inaccurately[10]. Conversely, staying too close to the speaker increases the risk of misinterpreting complex sentences, as interpreters do not have enough time to process syntactic structures. Furthermore, accents and unfamiliar speech patterns further impact simultaneous interpretation. Wu and Liao[25] found that interpreters perform worse when dealing with heavily accented speech, as it requires additional cognitive resources to decode pronunciation and meaning. In EFL contexts, where students may have limited exposure to native English accents, this challenge is particularly pronounced.

In practice, cognitive load theory has been widely employed to study interpretation performance. Research by Shao and Chai[10] indicates that working memory capacity

plays a crucial role in interpretation performance. Individuals with higher working memory capacity perform better in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, as they can manage information processing more efficiently. This has implications for interpreter training, as it suggests that exercises designed to improve working memory may have effects on the skill of interpretation as a whole (such as shadowing and chunking techniques). Linguistic proficiency is another major factor affecting interpretation quality. Studies have consistently shown that interpreters with higher proficiency levels in their second language (L2) perform better in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation tasks. Asman and Murni[26] assert that interpreters who are more fluent in their L2 exhibit incredible lexical retrieval speed and lower cognitive load during interpretation. In EFL contexts, limited exposure to authentic spoken English presents a challenge for student interpreters. Many students develop strong reading and writing skills but struggle with listening comprehension and spontaneous speech production. According to Al-Harahsheh et al.[16], one group of advanced EFL students in their study could not always process idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, and informal speech structures in real-time, resulting in interpretation errors. Training programs that incorporate extensive listening and speaking practice can help bridge this gap and improve students' overall interpretation performance.

In view of such challenges, as discussed previously, researchers have introduced various methods for improving interpretation training in EFL contexts. One such strategy is exposure to authentic English speech. According to Dong et al.[11], students who regularly listen to native English content - such as podcasts, TED talks, and news broadcasts - develop better comprehension and adaptation skills. This type of exposure helps students become accustomed to different accents, speech rates, and intonation patterns. Another effective strategy is the use of shadowing exercises, where students repeat spoken language immediately after hearing it. Russell[19] argued that shadowing improves working memory and working speed and is a beneficial exercise both for consecutive and simultaneous interpreters. Additionally, simulation-based training, where students practice interpretation in realistic scenarios, has been found to improve performance. According to Pöchhacker[2], role-playing exercises and real-time simulations allow students to develop strategies for coping with cognitive overload and to improve their capacity for speech segmentation. An introduction to the literature on consecutive and simultaneous interpretation sets the foundation for understanding the unique challenges that interpreters are presented with, especially in EFL contexts. While both types of interpretation have their respective challenges, consecutive interpretation requires strong memory retention and note-taking skills, and simultaneous interpretation demands rapid processing, divided attention, and resistance to cognitive overload. Factors such as linguistic proficiency, exposure to authentic speech, and working memory capacity all play a role in interpretation performance. Future research should focus on developing pedagogical strategies that specifically address the needs of student interpreters in EFL countries. By incorporating training methods that enhance memory, listening skills, and cognitive processing, educators can better prepare students for the demands of professional interpretation. Gile's Effort Model[27] is widely used to explain the cognitive challenges involved in both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. This model suggests that interpretation is a cognitively demanding task, requiring the allocation of listening, memory, and speech production resources simultaneously. When cognitive demands exceed the available capacity, performance declines, leading to errors and omissions in interpretation.

Studies related to consecutive interpretation have shed light on various areas like note-taking skills, memory retention, and organizing speech[21]. Many students struggle with effectively condensing information into manageable notes, leading to inaccuracies when rendering speech in the target language. Moreover, it requires a significant cognitive effort to retrieve and reconstruct the content of speech, and this results in the loss of information[26], especially among novice interpreters. Simultaneous interpretation, on the other hand, is even more demanding due to the need for real-time processing. Studies by Pöchhacker[2] and Moser-Mercer et al.[20] suggest that the significant difficulties faced by simultaneous interpreters include maintaining fluency, handling rapid speech, and managing cognitive overload. In EFL countries, students may find simultaneous interpretation even more challenging due to limited exposure to authentic English speech patterns and accents, which can hinder their ability to process and interpret speech accurately. Another critical factor influencing interpretation performance

is linguistic proficiency. Studies indicate that interpreters with higher proficiency in their second language perform better in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation tasks [28]. However, this automaticity may not be developed in EFL contexts in which exposure to English beyond the classroom is low, causing the interpretation in real time to be more complicated.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

The researcher-made instrument used in this study consisted of a structured questionnaire designed to quantitatively measure the challenges faced by English major students in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. The cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted by floating the printouts personally. The collected data was employed by SPSS v.27 to address the screened data.

3.2. Participants

The participants were randomly chosen from students majoring in legal English at Hanoi Law University during the academic year 2024–2025. The demographic information presented demographic and language competence data for a sample of 125 students. The gender distribution showed a significant imbalance, with 84.8% being female (106 students) and only 15.2% male (19 students). In terms of residence, the majority of students came from rural areas (47.2%) and mountainous/remote areas (45.6%), while only a small percentage (7.2%) resided in urban settings. Regarding English competence, a majority of students (62.4% or 78 students) had high proficiency, whereas 37.6% (47 students) had medium competence.

3.3. Research Instrument

The researcher-made questionnaire included demographic items (e.g., gender, residence, and English competence) and five-point Likert-scale statements assessing students' perceptions of interpretation difficulty, cognitive load, memory retention, fluency, accuracy, and external factors affecting performance. The questionnaire was constructed according to the attitudinal criteria proposed by Dörnyei and Dewaele [29]. The research instrument ensured reliability by using validated measurement scales from Cronbach's alpha values [30], which ranged from 0.71 to 0.91, to confirm the questionnaire's effectiveness in measuring the intended constructs. The content validity was established through expert reviews from interpretation educators.

3.4. Research Procedure

The research process involved a series of steps for collecting and analyzing data. The participants (students majoring in English) were first chosen according to prescriptive inclusion criteria for having had experience with both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. Next, students completed a structured questionnaire that gathered demographic information and measured their perceptions of interpretation difficulties using a Likert-scale format. Throughout the study, ethical considerations were maintained, including informed consent and confidentiality. The structured procedure provided a reliable and comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by student interpreters in an EFL context.

3.5. Statistical Tools

The study employed various statistical tools to analyze the results of the survey responses, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, which were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and perceptions of interpretation difficulty. Besides, correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between students' linguistic proficiency, cognitive load, and interpretation performance. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS v.27, ensuring a rigorous, data-driven approach to understanding the interpretation challenges faced by students in an EFL context. Additionally, means and standard deviations were calculated to provide a summary of the data according to the interval scales such as 1.00–1.80 (strong disagreement), 1.81–2.60 (disagreement), 2.61–3.40 (uncertainty), 3.41–4.20 (agreement), and 4.21–5.00 (strong agreement). The Independent-Samples T-Test and One-Way ANOVA were used to compare means and evaluate differences between groups, allowing for a recognition of statistically significant differences between varying categories.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents a detailed statistical analysis of student's perceptions and experiences regarding consecutive and simultaneous interpretation challenges using Likert-scale responses. For the perceived difficulty in interpretation, the findings indicated that students generally found consecutive interpretation easier than simultaneous interpretation (M = 3.66, SD = 0.720). Simultaneous interpretation was perceived as requiring more concentration (M = 3.94, SD = 0.755) and causing overwhelming feelings (M = 3.84, SD = 0.717), supporting previous research that highlighted the higher cognitive load associated with simultaneous interpretation, which was consistent with the findings of AlDayel and Alotaibi [28]. Students also agreed that consecutive interpretation was mentally exhausting (M = 3.70, SD = 0.730) and that switching between listening and speaking in simultaneous interpretation was challenging (M = 3.53, SD = 0.501). These findings aligned with Pöchhacker's research [2], which indicated that simultaneous interpretation placed greater strain on cognitive resources. Regarding the cognitive load in interpretation, students reported high levels of mental fatigue in simultaneous interpretation (M = 4.50, SD = 0.602), the highest mean score in this category, reinforcing the idea that simultaneous interpretation demanded continuous processing, leading to cognitive overload, this was also reported by Russell [19]. Interestingly, students agreed that consecutive interpretation allowed for better information processing (M = 3.49, SD = 0.702), possibly because they had more time to analyze and recall information. However, students were uncertain about experiencing real-time brain overload (M = 3.13, SD = 0.729) and the rapid pace of simultaneous interpretation affecting translation accuracy (M = 3.10, SD = 0.811), suggesting that while students acknowledged the challenges, some may have developed coping strategies to mitigate cognitive stress.

Table 1. Students' perspectives towards challenges of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
A. Perceived difficulty in interpretation				
1. Consecutive interpretation is easier for me than simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.66	0.720	agreement
2. Simultaneous interpretation requires more concentration than consecutive interpretation.	125	3.94	0.755	agreement
3. I feel overwhelmed when performing simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.84	0.717	agreement
4. Consecutive interpretation is mentally exhausting for me.	125	3.70	0.730	agreement
5. I find it difficult to switch between listening and speaking in simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.53	0.501	agreement
B. Cognitive load in interpretation				
6. I often struggle with maintaining focus during simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.51	0.582	agreement
7. I experience high levels of mental fatigue after performing simultaneous interpretation.	125	4.50	0.602	strong agreement
8. Consecutive interpretation allows me to process information better than simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.49	0.702	agreement
9. I often feel that my brain is overloaded when interpreting in real-time.	125	3.13	0.729	uncertainty
10. The rapid pace of simultaneous interpretation makes it difficult for me to produce accurate translations.	125	3.10	0.811	uncertainty
C. Memory and note-taking challenges				
11. I rely heavily on my memory when performing consecutive interpretation.	125	3.50	0.552	agreement
12. I find it challenging to retain long sentences when interpreting consecutively.	125	3.85	0.852	agreement
13. I often forget key information while interpreting consecutively.	125	2.85	0.799	uncertainty
14. My note-taking skills help me retain information for consecutive interpretation.	125	4.11	0.710	agreement
15. I struggle to read and interpret my own notes when performing consecutive interpretation.	125	3.53	0.561	agreement

Table 1. *Cont.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
D. Fluency and accuracy in interpretation				
16. I frequently hesitate when interpreting in both consecutive and simultaneous modes.	125	3.57	0.697	agreement
17. I often make grammatical mistakes when interpreting in real-time.	125	3.80	0.741	agreement
18. My fluency decreases under pressure when performing simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.74	0.772	agreement
19. I can maintain accuracy in consecutive interpretation better than in simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.84	0.787	agreement
20. I struggle with choosing the right words quickly when interpreting.	125	3.79	0.765	agreement
E. Training and preparation for interpretation				
21. My academic training has adequately prepared me for consecutive interpretation.	125	3.86	0.711	agreement
22. My academic training has adequately prepared me for simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.64	0.798	agreement
23. I need more practical exercises to improve my interpretation skills.	125	4.09	0.802	agreement
24. Shadowing exercises have helped me improve my simultaneous interpretation skills.	125	3.56	0.817	agreement
25. I feel that my interpretation course lacks sufficient real-world practice.	125	2.94	0.786	uncertainty
F. Linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance				
26. My proficiency in English significantly affects my interpretation performance.	125	3.51	0.882	agreement
27. I struggle to interpret complex sentence structures from English to my native language.	125	3.81	0.692	agreement
28. My ability to think in English helps me perform better in simultaneous interpretation.	125	2.98	0.877	uncertainty
29. I often find it difficult to interpret idiomatic expressions correctly.	125	3.66	0.659	agreement
30. I need more exposure to native English speech to improve my interpretation skills.	125	3.29	0.706	uncertainty
G. Stress and anxiety in interpretation				
31. I feel nervous before performing simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.84	0.727	agreement
32. My stress level affects my ability to interpret accurately.	125	2.81	0.732	agreement
33. I feel more confident in consecutive interpretation than in simultaneous interpretation.	125	3.94	0.840	agreement
34. I perform better in interpretation tasks when I am relaxed.	125	3.54	0.801	agreement
35. The fear of making mistakes affects my interpretation fluency.	125	3.98	0.823	agreement
H. External factors affecting interpretation performance				
36. Background noise makes it difficult for me to concentrate while interpreting.	125	2.88	0.752	uncertainty
37. The speech rate of the speaker affects my ability to interpret effectively.	125	3.54	0.651	agreement
38. Accents and pronunciation variations make simultaneous interpretation more challenging.	125	3.86	0.850	agreement
39. The length of a speech segment impacts my ability to interpret accurately.	125	3.83	0.831	agreement
40. Technical issues (e.g., poor audio quality) make remote interpretation more difficult.	125	4.46	0.725	strong agreement
I. Strategies and coping mechanisms				
41. I use paraphrasing as a strategy to handle difficult sentences during interpretation.	125	3.50	0.662	agreement
42. Taking deep breaths helps me manage my stress before interpretation tasks.	125	4.48	0.732	strong agreement
43. Practicing listening to different English accents has improved my interpretation skills.	125	4.01	0.693	agreement
44. I prefer breaking down sentences into smaller parts when interpreting.	125	4.08	0.692	agreement
45. I use visualization techniques to help me remember key concepts during interpretation.	125	3.80	0.682	agreement

Table 1. *Cont.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
J. Future needs and skill development				
46. I would benefit from additional training in consecutive interpretation techniques.	125	4.10	0.831	agreement
47. I would benefit from additional training in simultaneous interpretation techniques.	125	3.78	0.789	agreement
48. I need more exposure to real-life interpretation scenarios to improve my skills.	125	4.14	0.647	agreement
49. I feel that interpretation should be taught earlier in my academic program.	125	2.75	0.715	uncertainty
50. I am motivated to continue developing my interpretation skills despite the challenges.	125	3.90	0.741	agreement
Valid N (listwise)	125			

Concerning memory and note-taking challenges, the data denoted those participants relied heavily on memory when performing consecutive interpretation (M = 3.50, SD = 0.552) and struggled with retaining long sentences (M = 3.85, SD = 0.852). This aligned with Lv and Liang [22], who emphasized that effective note-taking was crucial for consecutive interpretation success. While students reported that their note-taking skills helped them retain information (M = 4.11, SD = 0.710), they also struggled to interpret their own notes (M = 3.53, SD = 0.561), indicating a need for improved note-taking strategies. This is in line with the findings of Viezzi's [8]. Furthermore, when examining fluency and accuracy in interpretation, the data revealed that fluency is a critical factor in interpretation, and findings indicate that students frequently hesitate during interpretation (M = 3.57, SD = 0.697) and make grammatical mistakes in real-time (M = 3.80, SD = 0.741). Simultaneous interpretation negatively impacts fluency under pressure (M = 3.74, SD = 0.772), which is a known issue in interpretation studies such as Pöchhacker [2]. However, students agreed that they maintained higher accuracy in consecutive interpretation (M = 3.84, SD = 0.787) than in simultaneous interpretation, reinforcing the idea that processing time affected interpretation accuracy. When examining the training and preparation for interpretation, the data denoted that the participants generally felt that their academic training had adequately prepared them for both consecutive (M = 3.86, SD = 0.711) and simultaneous interpretation (M = 3.64, SD = 0.798). However, they express a strong need for more practical exercises (M = 4.09, SD = 0.802), highlighting gaps in current interpreter training programs, which aligns with the research by Orlando & Hlavac [21]. While shadowing exercises were reported as helpful (M = 3.56, SD = 0.817), students were uncertain whether their interpretation course included sufficient real-world practice (M = 2.94, SD = 0.786), emphasizing the need for more exposure to authentic interpretation scenarios. This point is similar to the findings of Al-Jarf's research [31].

When considering linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance, the results indicated that linguistic proficiency played a crucial role in interpretation performance, and students agree that their English proficiency affects interpretation performance (M = 3.51, SD = 0.882). Struggles with complex sentence structures (M = 3.81, SD = 0.692) and idiomatic expressions (M = 3.66, SD = 0.659) are common, which is consistent with studies suggesting that interpreters in EFL countries face additional linguistic challenges [5]. Students were uncertain about their ability to think in English benefiting their performance (M = 2.98, SD = 0.877), which may indicate limited exposure to immersive English environments, which was also reflected in the research conducted by Bartłomiejczyk and Stachowiak-Szymczak [9]. Additionally, regarding the stress and anxiety in interpretation, the results presented that interpretation was often associated with high levels of stress, and students reported nervousness before simultaneous interpretation (M = 3.84, SD = 0.727). Fear of making mistakes affects fluency (M = 3.98, SD = 0.823), aligning with previous research that links anxiety with performance difficulties in interpretation [14]. Interestingly, students agreed that they felt more confident in consecutive interpretation than in simultaneous interpretation (M = 3.94, SD = 0.840), reinforcing the idea that simultaneous interpretation was more anxiety-inducing due to its real-time demands. This finding can be seen in the study by Asman and Murni [26]. As for the external factors affecting interpretation

performance, the results showed that external factors such as accents and pronunciation variations (M = 3.86, SD = 0.850) and speech rate (M = 3.54, SD = 0.651) significantly impacted interpretation performance, supporting findings from Kurz (2003) that non-standard accents increased cognitive load. Students strongly agreed that technical issues (e.g., poor audio quality) negatively impact remote interpretation (M = 4.46, SD = 0.725), aligning with research indicating that technological barriers hinder interpretation accuracy. This result was complied with the findings of Murtiningsih and Ardlillah[18]. Examining the strategies and coping mechanisms, the outcomes described that the students reported using paraphrasing as a strategy (M = 3.50, SD = 0.662) and practising listening to different English accents (M = 4.01, SD = 0.693), supporting research on adaptation strategies in interpretation, this finding was compliance with the research conducted by Wu and Liao[25]. Taking deep breaths before interpretation tasks received one of the highest agreement ratings (M = 4.48, SD = 0.732), highlighting the importance of relaxation techniques in reducing interpretation anxiety, as seen in the research by Russell[19]. Lastly, when analyzing the future needs and skill development, the results stated that the students overwhelmingly agreed that they would benefit from additional training in both consecutive (M = 4.10, SD = 0.831) and simultaneous interpretation (M = 3.78, SD = 0.789), reinforcing the need for more specialized instruction, this could be seen in Kitjaroonchai's research[13]. The need for real-life interpretation scenarios (M = 4.14, SD = 0.647) also emphasized gaps in experiential learning opportunities in EFL settings.

Table 2 presents a t-test for equality of means to examine gender-based differences in factors affecting consecutive and simultaneous interpretation challenges. The results indicate that most factors, including perceived difficulty, cognitive load, fluency, training, stress, external factors, and coping strategies, show no significant gender differences ($p > 0.05$). The implication here is that interpretation challenges are the same for both genders of students, which fits well with some established literature suggesting interpretation problems are less dependent on gender and more so on training, cognitive load and experience. However, there was a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.015$) was observed in linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance, with female students rating their proficiency lower than male students. They often reflect variations in language confidence rather than actual ability, a pattern found among EFL studies. The findings imply that while interpretation challenges are equally distributed across genders, female students might require additional support in language confidence-building strategies. Whether such gaps in self-perceived proficiency can be bridged with appropriately targeted training and ultimately lead to more equal performance outcomes across genders remains an open question for future research.

The ANOVA results in **Table 3** analyze whether participants' residence (urban, rural, or remote areas) significantly influences their perception of interpretation challenges across multiple factors. The p-values (Sig.) for all variables exceed 0.05, indicating no statistically significant differences among students from different residential backgrounds. For instance, perceived difficulty in interpretation (F = 0.073, p = 0.787), cognitive load (F = 0.785, p = 0.377), and fluency and accuracy (F = 0.015, p = 0.904) all show no significant variance across residence groups. Similarly, memory and note-taking challenges (F = 0.517, p = 0.474), stress and anxiety (F = 0.261, p = 0.611), and strategies and coping mechanisms (F = 0.958, p = 0.330) suggest that students' interpretation challenges are not dependent on whether they live in urban, rural, or remote areas. The lack of significance in linguistic proficiency (F = 0.011, p = 0.918) denotes that students from different residential backgrounds demonstrate similar levels of interpretation performance, contradicting some studies suggesting that rural students might have less English exposure.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the difficulties encountered by English-major students in an EFL context during consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, emphasizing aspects such as perceived difficulty, cognitive load, memory retention, fluency, accuracy, training efficacy, linguistic proficiency, stress, external influences, coping mechanisms, and future training requirements. The results enhance comprehension of the cognitive, linguistic, and emotional challenges that affect interpretation training and performance in an EFL educational setting. The main finding of this study showed that students highlighted simultaneous interpretation as more difficult than sequential interpretation, which matched with other

Table 2. The comparison between gender with factors affecting the challenges of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Perceived difficulty in interpretation	Equal variances assumed	0.432	0.512	0.108	123	0.914	0.04767	0.43991	−0.8231	0.91844
	Equal variances not assumed			0.105	24.289	0.917	0.04767	0.45354	−0.8878	0.98314
Cognitive load in interpretation	Equal variances assumed	2.644	0.107	1.441	123	0.152	0.49553	0.34387	−0.1851	1.17619
	Equal variances not assumed			1.206	22.033	0.240	0.49553	0.41076	−0.3563	1.34733
Memory and note−taking challenges	Equal variances assumed	0.512	0.476	−0.704	123	0.483	−0.23684	0.33634	−0.9026	0.42892
	Equal variances not assumed			−0.777	27.300	0.444	−0.23684	0.30485	−0.8620	0.38834
Fluency and accuracy in interpretation	Equal variances assumed	1.127	0.290	−0.657	123	0.512	−0.30189	0.45945	−1.211	0.60756
	Equal variances not assumed			−0.672	25.370	0.508	−0.30189	0.44941	−1.227	0.62300
Training and preparation for interpretation	Equal variances assumed	0.363	0.548	−1.42	123	0.157	−0.49503	0.34778	−1.184	0.19338
	Equal variances not assumed			−1.35	23.831	0.191	−0.49503	0.36770	−1.254	0.26414
Linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance	Equal variances assumed	2.453	0.120	−2.47	123	0.015	−0.94886	0.38438	−1.71	−0.18800
	Equal variances not assumed			−2.96	30.094	0.006	−0.94886	0.32044	−1.603	−0.29452
Stress and anxiety in interpretation	Equal variances assumed	1.764	0.187	0.557	123	0.579	0.20804	0.37366	−0.5316	0.94767
	Equal variances not assumed			0.678	30.710	0.503	0.20804	0.30671	−0.4177	0.83383
External factors affecting interpretation performance	Equal variances assumed	0.018	0.893	0.129	123	0.897	0.04916	0.38031	−0.7036	0.80195
	Equal variances not assumed			0.121	23.713	0.904	0.04916	0.40482	−0.787	0.88520
Strategies and coping mechanisms	Equal variances assumed	3.273	0.073	0.464	123	0.644	0.12363	0.26657	−0.4040	0.65130
	Equal variances not assumed			0.545	29.335	0.590	0.12363	0.22679	−0.34	0.58725
Future needs and skill development	Equal variances assumed	2.335	0.129	−0.644	123	0.521	−0.29990	0.46543	−1.221	0.62139
	Equal variances not assumed			−0.536	21.962	0.597	−0.29990	0.55923	−1.46	0.85999

studies focusing on the higher cognitive load for interpreters correlating with a simultaneous interpretation scheme. A multitude of students reported experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed, mental tiredness, and difficulties sustaining attention throughout simultaneous interpretation tasks. The results indicate that supplementary cognitive training, including working memory exercises and multitasking drills, may aid students in coping with the elevated processing demands of simultaneous interpretation. One significant problem the students faced was that they had to remember the speech and take notes in consecutive interpretations. Although many acknowledged the need for note-taking abilities, several had difficulty reading and understanding their notes proficiently. Future training programs should prioritize the instruction of good note-taking procedures, including organized symbols, visualization tools, and hierarchical arrangement to enhance students' retention and reconstruction of speech. Fluency and accuracy were recognized as significant impediments, especially in high-pressure interpreting contexts. Students often expressed reservations, exhibited grammatical errors, and had challenges in rapid word retrieval, particularly during simultaneous interpretation. These issues correspond with prior research indicating that cognitive strain may disrupt real-time speech production and lexical retrieval. The implications of these results are that interpreter training must include shadowing exercises, speech chunking, and paraphrase drills to help students develop fluency and become less prone to breakdowns under pressure. A significant facet of the research was students' views of their academic preparation. Although most students considered their training sufficient for sequential interpretation, several said that more practical exercises were necessary to prepare for simultaneous interpretation adequately. The research indicated a statistically significant disparity in language skills between male and female pupils, with females assessing their proficiency as lower than that of males. This suggests that self-perception is more driven by confidence than actual competence, as mentioned in previous EFL studies. Training programs must include confidence-enhancing activities, including peer cooperation, feedback-oriented learning, and speech exposure exercises, to assist students - particularly female students - cultivate enhanced linguistic self-efficacy. Stress and anxiety also surfaced as significant variables influencing performance. A considerable number of students acknowledged experiencing anxiety before simultaneous interpretation, and the apprehension of errors impacted their fluency. This confirms previous work that anxiety negatively impacts working memory and increases interpretative errors. Techniques such as deep breathing, relaxation methods, and regulated speech tempo were identified as useful in

Table 3. The differences among the participants' residence towards factors affecting the challenges of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perceived difficulty in interpretation	Between Groups	0.228	1	0.228	0.073	0.787
	Within Groups	383.324	123	3.116		
	Total	383.552	124			
Cognitive load in interpretation	Between Groups	0.997	1	0.997	0.517	0.474
	Within Groups	237.291	123	1.929		
	Total	238.288	124			
Fluency and accuracy in interpretation	Between Groups	0.494	1	0.494	0.271	0.604
	Within Groups	224.594	123	1.826		
Training and preparation for interpretation	Total	225.088	124			
Linguistic proficiency and interpretation performance	Between Groups	0.036	1	0.036	0.011	0.918
	Within Groups	419.772	123	3.413		
	Total	419.808	124			
Stress and anxiety in interpretation	Between Groups	0.515	1	0.515	0.261	0.611
	Within Groups	243.133	123	1.977		
External factors affecting interpretation performance	Total	243.648	124			
Strategies and coping mechanisms	Between Groups	2.374	1	2.374	0.958	0.330
	Within Groups	304.938	123	2.479		
	Total	307.312	124			
Future needs and skill development	Between Groups	0.312	1	0.312	0.138	0.711
	Within Groups	277.080	123	2.253		
Perceived difficulty in interpretation	Total	277.392	124			
Cognitive load in interpretation	Between Groups	1.819	1	1.819	0.785	0.377
	Within Groups	284.853	123	2.316		
	Total	286.672	124			
Memory and note-taking challenges	Between Groups	0.017	1	0.017	0.015	0.904
	Within Groups	141.055	123	1.147		
Fluency and accuracy in interpretation	Total	141.072	124			
	Between Groups	0.050	1	0.050	0.014	0.905
	Within Groups	430.702	123	3.502		
	Total	430.752	124			

alleviating tension, suggesting that stress management needs to be a fundamental component of interpretation training programs. External factors like background noise, speech speed and pronunciation variations were acknowledged as critical challenges. Many students indicated difficulties with rapid speech and unusual accents, corroborating prior research that suggests interpreters exhibit diminished performance when confronted with novel pronunciation patterns. The findings indicate that interpretation training has to include exposure to many dialects and rapid speech to improve adaptation. The students expressed a clear desire for greater real-world interpretation opportunities, though some felt that interpreting should be offered earlier in their academic curricula. This highlights a need for adjustments to curricula to ensure that students experience incremental skill progressions throughout their training, rather than just being imparted the skills of interpretation in later stages. Longitudinal studies addressing the development of interpretation skills and ways to increase confidence should be carried out in the future to confirm this data, in addition to ensuring that students possess support for success in professional interpretation responsibilities. Through dedicated training and curriculum-based improvements to combat these challenges, academia can better prepare students for the nuanced nature of interpretation in the real world, allowing greater accuracy, fluency, and resilience within their future career paths.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.N.N. and G.B.T.K.; methodology, G.B.T.K.; software, G.B.T.K.; validation, A.N.N. and T.V.V.; formal analysis, T.V.V.; resources, A.N.N.; data curation, G.B.T.K.; writing—original draft preparation, T.V.V.; writing—review and editing, T.V.V. All authors have read

and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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