

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO  
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: NGOẠI NGỮ**

**Sinh viên : Hoàng Thị Thanh Vân**

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn : Th.s Đào Thị Lan Hương**

**HẢI PHÒNG - 2013**

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**SHORT-TERM MEMORY IN ENGLISH TO  
VIETNAMESE CONSECUTIVE  
INTERPRETING**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY  
NGÀNH: NGOẠI NGỮ**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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**Lớp:** .....**Ngành:**.....

**Tên đề tài:** .....

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# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

**1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp**

**( về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).**

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**2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.**

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**3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.**

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Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày 29 tháng 06 năm 2013

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

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*Hải Phòng, ngày ..... tháng.....năm 2013*

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**2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện : .....**

*(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)*

**Ngày..... tháng..... năm 2013**

**Người chấm phản biện**

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Hai Phong, June, 2013

Hoang Thi Thanh Van

## **TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>STM:</b>	Short - term memory
<b>LTM:</b>	Long - term memory
<b>CI:</b>	Consecutive interpreting

# Abstract

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Interpreting is a demanding and challenging job. A professional interpreter must possess an ability of combining many skills in order to perform the task of orally transferring the text from one language into another one. Those skills are listening, note-taking, memorizing, public speaking, etc. Among these skills, memorizing (especially short-term memory), is a crucial key which decides the success of the interpreting task.

This paper discusses the short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting, intends for English majors at Haiphong Private University (HPU). From the view point of a fourth year English major, the author highlight the important role of short-term memory skill, find out the shortcomings of HPU's English majors in learning and applying this skill. Therefore, several important techniques to effectively improve short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting are proposed. This study would be a reference for students and teachers of Faculty of Foreign Languages at HPU. Especially, it can help enhance the learning results of English majors in interpreting lessons as well as assist their future job related to interpreting field.

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

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## 1. Background to the study

In the age of global integration, the need of mutual understanding among countries in the world has been increasing. However, different languages are obviously significant communicative barriers. Being considered as bridge of human communicative interaction, the possession of interpreting skills is an effective means to break these barriers. Thus, interpreting is now becoming an attractive and potential career. However, the work of interpreting is not only demanding but also challenging.

Interpreting is an obligatory subject of all English majors at Hai Phong Private University (HPU). It is considered as a hard and challenging subject. To achieve the best results, learners need to have good English foundation knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary. Beside such aspects, it is necessary to have techniques. One of these should be short-term memory.

Memory is one of the major elements affecting the process of storing and conveying information. Lack of mnemonic capacities may prevent people from getting access to sources of information quickly and exactly. However, due to the brain formation, human cannot remember everything they have heard or read which is likely to be too complicated or not necessary for a long-term use. Generally, memory is divided into two forms: long-term memory and short-term memory. In this paper, the role of short-term memory is analyzed and highlighted to encourage the best use of memory in the context of interpreting classes at HPU.

Short-term memory is not only necessary but also obligatory for learners of foreign languages. After four years of academic training at the University, the target set by Faculty of Foreign Languages as well as most English majors is to become proficient translators and interpreters. Due to the limitation of interpreting training time which only consists of 4 credits

(approximately 90 periods), students do not have many chances to practice and improve their STM. Some learners can be aware of its essential role. However, many of them have not applied this skill effectively. Therefore, it is vital to take up STM in the interpreting training course. With this regard, the objective of this thesis is to suggest the students of Faculty of Foreign Languages how to use STM in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting in the most useful way.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The main aim of this thesis is to introduce the benefits of STM for interpreting study and practice, more importantly presenting the students of Faculty of Foreign Languages in HPU the most practical implications of using STM towards more of effective interpreting.

In order to achieve this aim, the study attempts to:

- Investigate the current situation of HPU students' use of STM.
- Analyze difficulties they encounter when using STM in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.
- Evaluate STM practice and improvement of students in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.
- Propose some suggestions to improve STM in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.

## **3. Scope of the study**

Short-term memory is very useful and essential in interpreting; however, it is a wide and challenging skill. In order to obtain the greatest findings and enhance the effectiveness of the study, it is scoped with “short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting”.

## **4. Methods of the study**

In order to achieve the mentioned aims, different methods are carried out. They include:

- Quantitative – statistical Analysis (Questionnaires)
- Qualitative analysis (spoken – language texts)

The questionnaires are designed for forty five (45) third and fourth year English majors at HPU to find out the realistic situation and the demands of them in interpreting lessons.

## **5. Organization of the thesis**

This study includes 5 chapters:

- ❖ Chapter one is the introduction of background, aims, scope, research method and organization of the study.
- ❖ Chapter two is about the literature review. It answers questions such as what is short-term memory, consecutive interpreting and the role of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.
- ❖ Chapter three focuses on the usage of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. It also presents the results from the data collection through survey with forty-five (45) third and fourth year English majors at HPU.
- ❖ In chapter four, suggestions to improve short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting are proposed. They include listening improvement, training games, retelling story and mnemonic memory.
- ❖ Chapter five is the conclusion including summary, implication for learning and suggestions for further studies.

# CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

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## 1. Short-term memory

### 1.1 Definitions

Before learning short-term memory, it is necessary to understand what memory is. Memory is the mental activity of recalling information that you have learned or experienced. That simple definition, though, covers a complex process that involves many different parts of the brain and serves us in disparate ways. Memory can be short-term or long-term.

According to Zhong (2001) short-term memory, sometime referred to as “primary” or “active” memory, is the part of memory which stores a limited amount of information for a limited amount of time, roughly 15-30 seconds.

As the studies of Mayer (2003), STM includes three basic processes:

- 1) recently processed sensory input
- 2) items recently retrieved from long-term memory
- 3) the results of recent mental processing

On the other hand, from the linguistic perspective, Smith (1985) said “STM has a very limited duration. We can remember six or seven items only as long as we give all our attention to them”.

Those are different definitions; however, all of them refer to the capacity for holding a small amount of information in mind in a short period of time and readily available state. STM allows to recall for a period of several seconds to a minute without rehearsal.

### 1.2 Major characteristics of short-term memory

Firstly, as the findings of Crowden (1982): regarding to *input of information*, information enters the STM as a result of applying attention to stimulus, which is about a quarter of a second.

Secondly, put into *feature of modality*, STM must be encoded in order to store information. There are three basic possibilities in short-term memory:



- Coding is rehearsing through sub-vocal sounds. (Conrad, 1964 and Baddeley, 1966)
- Semantic coding is applying meaning to information, relating it to something abstract. (Baddeley, 1990)
- Visual coding is, as implied, storing information as pictures rather than sound. (Posner and Keele, 1967)

Thirdly, related to *capacity of storing*, the capacity of STM is small and restricted. It is seven items of information (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

Fourthly, sharing the common feature of memory, it cannot be avoid the *loss of information* in short-term memory. Some studies have explained why we forget information in process. According to Baddeley, Thompson and Buchanan (1975), information decays overtime. Waugh and Norman (1965) supposed that existing information is replaced by newly received information when the storage capacity is full. Additionally, Keppel and Underwood (1962) emphasized the interference; it is the appearance of other information in the storage at the same time which distorts the original information.

In conclusion, there are four main characteristics of STM related to four factors including *input of information, feature of modality, capacity of storing* and *information loss*.

## **2. Consecutive interpreting**

### **2.1 Interpreting**

In order to give a clear definition of interpreting, it is useful to relate it to another activity for which interpreting is often mistaken- translation. A straightforward explanation of translation given by Catford (1965, p.11) can help even non-professionals have an overall picture of what translation is. He simply described translation as an “*operation performed on languages, a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another*”. Another definition of translation put forward by Edmond Cary (1985, p. 85), as cited in Lederer, 2003, on page 7, has received the approval from many linguistic theorists.

*Translation is a process which attempts to establish equivalents between two texts expressed in two different languages. These equivalents are, by definition, always dependent on the nature of the two texts, on their objectives, on the relationship between the two cultures involved and their moral, intellectual and emotional conditions.*

*What is Interpreting?* To arrive at a convincing answer to this question, Roderick Jones, a European Union senior conference interpreter, did not set up a “standard” definition of interpreting. He only stated that interpreting is “*immediate oral translation*” (2002, p.3). Interpreting, just like translation, is fundamentally the art of re-expressing. The interpreter listens to a speaker in one language, gets the content of what is being said, and then immediately verbally re-expresses his or her understanding of the meaning in another language.

From other angle, Cynthia Roy (2000, p.3) applied the linguistic approaches of discourse analysis to the analytical study of interpreting in her book entitled *Interpreting as a discourse process*. She said, “*Interpreting for people who do not speak a common language is a linguistic and social act of communication*”. That means interpreting is a process of conversational exchanges between two primary speakers and through a person called interpreter who has knowledge and understanding of the entire communicative situation, including fluency in languages, competence in appropriate usage within each language, and in managing the cross-cultural flow of talk.

It is obvious that both interpreting and translation “...*consist of understanding an original text, deverbalizing its linguistic form and then expressing in another language [with] the ideas grasped and emotion felt...*” (Marianne Lederer, 2003, p.8), however, while translation refers to converting a written text from one language into another, interpreting refers to orally converting one spoken language into another.

Both interpreters and translators are required to have a good command of the native language and at least one foreign language, analytical ability, high concentration, subject matter knowledge and sensitivity to cultural issues. However, there are different sets of indispensable skills for each. While a translator must also be sharp writer and skilled editor, it is important for an interpreter to have extraordinary listening abilities, exceptionally good memory aided by good note-taking techniques and excellent public speaking skills. In addition, interpreters must have intellectual capacity to immediately transform idioms, colloquialisms and other culturally specific references into similar statements that the target audience can understand without the using dictionaries and supplemental reference materials. Above all, unlike translators, interpreters have to deal with oral message under time constraints without the opportunity of revising, improving or polishing their interpretation. For these reasons, many people who see interpreters at work think that being an interpreter is extremely demanding and challenging.

## **2.2 Consecutive interpreting**

As far as the classification of interpreting is concerned, most people who get involved into linguistic study, would give their attention to what is meant by consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting. In fact, consecutive and simultaneous are the two sub-types of interpreting, based on the interpreting mode used by the interpreter: simultaneous, which occurs nearly at the same time as the original utterance of a speech; consecutive, which follows a chunk of speech varying in length from very few sentences to an entire speech lasting several minutes.

A more detailed picture of differences between the two main modes of interpreting can be seen clearly with the definition given by Jones (2002, p.5-6). He stated that a consecutive interpreter *“listens to the totality of a speaker’s comments, or at least a significant passage, and then reconstitutes the speech with the help of notes taken while listening; the interpreter is thus speaking consecutively to the original speaker, hence the*

*name*". And he explained the second mode as follows: "*Here the interpreter listens to the beginning of the speaker's comments then begins interpreting while the speech continues, carrying on throughout the speech, to finish almost at the same time as the original. The interpreter is thus speaking simultaneously to the original, hence again the name*".

From the above brief description, it is clear that the primary and significant difference between consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting is the time gap between the delivery of the speaker's message and the beginning of the interpretation. Whether working consecutively or simultaneously, the interpreter first has to actively listen to the speaker, properly understand and logically analyze what is being said and then restructure the speech in an appropriate equivalent in a different language.

Consecutive interpreters are said to produce a more accurate and equivalent interpretation than simultaneous colleagues because "*the interpreter does not need to split their attention between receiving the message, and monitoring their output, as is required in simultaneous, they can devote more of their processing to analysis and reformulation of the text*" (Santiago, 2004, p.5). Moreover, because consecutive interpreters have time to take notes which serves as a very effective tool of the interpreters.

In short, *consecutive interpreting* is the process that the interpreter has to listen to a speech in one language and translating it orally into another. Of course, a time lapse between the speech and its interpretation is available. The interpreter begins their interpretation of a complete message after the speaker has stopped producing the source utterance. In comparison with *simultaneous interpreting*, this mode is less difficult. Therefore, with the ability of English majors at the university, it should be focus on *consecutive interpreting* practice.

## **2.3 Short-term memory and English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting**

### ***Role of short-term memory in interpreting***

As mentioned above, STM is an essential part in the process of interpreting. It is believed that interpreting is an STM-centered activity, which includes encoding of information from the source language, storing of information, retrieval of information and decoding of information into target language. Depend on different modes of interpreting, STM has different roles to interpreting process, however, its role is undeniable.

The most important thing to the interpreter when he gets input is that he has to remember what he has just heard. He may have excellent analyzing skill or skilled public speaking capacity but he will have nothing to say if he does not remember what he has been heard. Thus, his interpretation fails. That is reason why Phelan (2001: 4-5) mentions that *“The interpreter needs a good STM to retain what he or she has just heard and a good LTM to put the information into context. Ability to concentrate is a factor as is the ability to analyze and process what is heard”*.

For interpreters, STM is extremely important because they are not allowed to omit any part of source language. Especially, in court interpretation, it is not acceptable to omit anything from the source, no matter how fast the source speaks. Thus, not only transferring skill but also memory is necessary in interpreting.

### ***Short- term memory and consecutive interpreting***

As mentioned previously, memory is one of the basic skills of interpreting. In consecutive interpreting process, STM is by far more important and helpful. It is an active process. The interpreter has to memorize the message from speaker actively in a short period of time.

According to Gile (1992:191, 1995b:179), consecutive interpreting consists of two phases: a listening and reformulation phase and a reconstruction phase which are illustrated by the formula:

**Phase one: I = L+M+N**

I = Interpreting

L = Listening and analyzing the source language speech

M = Short term memory required between the time information is heard and the time it is written down in the notes.

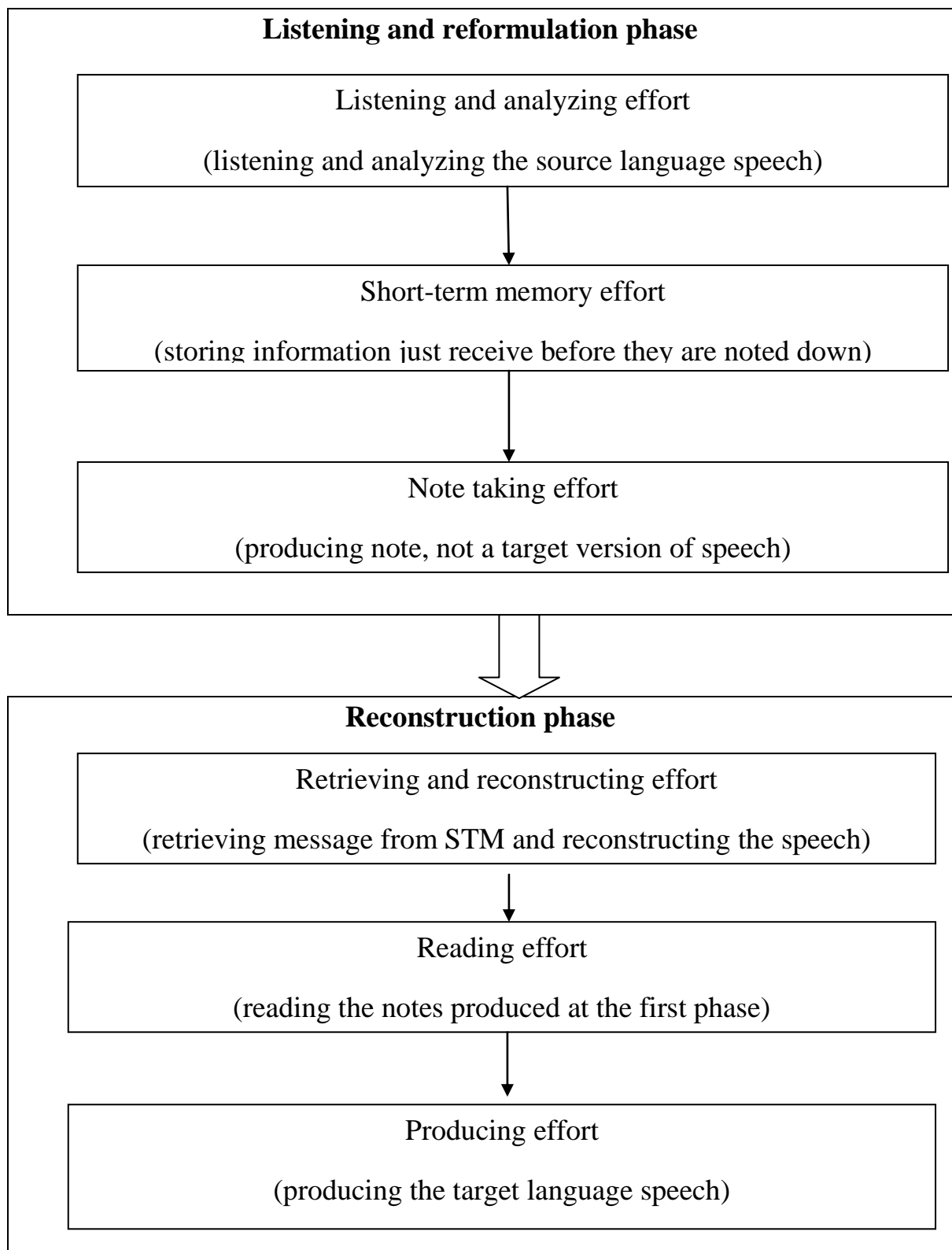
N = Note-taking

**Phase two: I = Rem + Read + P**

Rem = Retrieving message from their STM and reconstructing the speech

Read = Reading the notes

P = Producing the target language speech



*Figure 1: Gile's Effort Model for Consecutive Interpreting*

It can be seen clearly from the figure above that STM appears very soon, at the first phase of consecutive interpreting process. It is the link between what is heard and what is noted down. Thus, the interpreter will have nothing to take note and then interpret if he cannot memorize.

### ***Short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting***

As mentioned previously, STM is the connection of what has been heard and what will then be noted down and finally the target language utterance. Students have a great advantage in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpretation because they do not have problems with speaking skill as they only have to utter in their mother tongue. However, in English – Vietnamese interpretation, English is the foreign language to the students and the speaking speed is always fairly high.

In English – Vietnamese interpretation, students possess more benefits in producing the target language speech. They do not have to speak English, which the pronunciation is a hard barrier and can prevent the interpreter from accurate target information. In fact, many students get difficulties in pronouncing English such as ending sounds, intonation, aspirated consonants, etc. These shortcomings sometimes cause misunderstanding. Therefore, the interpreters obviously get more advantages when speaking in their native language.

On the contrary, the learners have to face with barrier of listening skill. As Figure 1 shows, STM effort appears right after listening and analyzing effort so that listening ability can disturb the short-term memory. Several problems will happen such as loss of information and mishearing... Hence, improvement of STM must combine with the practice of listening ability to achieve the best results in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting



# **CHAPTER III: THE STUDY OF SHORT-TERM MEMORY USAGE IN ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE INTERPRETING**

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## **1. Introduction**

This study demonstrates the issue short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. Therefore, it includes both theoretical and practical aspect. Due to these outstanding characteristics, the two aspects with different application of methodology should be applied throughout the studying of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.

According to the literature of short-term memory in consecutive interpreting, surveys were carried out with forty –five (45) third and fourth year English majors at HPU. This supplied true situations of this issue. By gathering material and analyzing information, this paper reveals the usage of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting by learners of this subject at HPU. Therefore, it highlights the role of short-term memory and encourages using this useful skill.

## **2. Subject of the study**

The theme of the thesis is “Short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting”; hence, its structure is to demonstrate the aspects of the theme: the role of short-term memory, the relation between short-term memory and English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting and the suggestions to improve this skill.

This study is aimed to make profit for interpreters in general and for language students in particular. Admittedly, students become the major subjects of this study, who are interviewed in the poll or asked in the questionnaire in terms of primary research methodology. The respondents of this questionnaire survey are forty-five (45) third and fourth year honor

students in Faculty of Foreign Languages, HPU. They are selected because they were taking the course of translation in their curricula.

Indirectly, by means of secondary research methodology, this study also gets access to language students (or interpreting trainees) through some researches already conducted by other authors and published in previous books, journals, magazines, thesis or other kinds of documents.

### **3. Instrumentations**

In order to finish this study, the combination of primary and secondary research methodology was conducted. Besides, the method of collection data, actual experience and revision are implemented.

The questionnaire survey was created to find out the actual appliance of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting of English majors. Multiple choice questions were designed (see Appendix). Some direct interviews were also applied. The students were asked to answer questionnaires relating the following issues:

- Investigate the current situation of HPU students' use of short-term memory.
- Analyze the difficulties they encounter when using STM in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.
- Evaluate STM in English – Vietnamese practice and improvement of students.
- Propose suggestions to improve in English – Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.

In addition, the research was finished thanks to the advice of the instructor who has been working in the field of interpreting and obtains much experience of short-term memory skill.

### **4. Procedures**

The author had to read many related information and references. It also took time to surf internet to search useful websites which discuss short-term memory. Next, interviews and surveys with friends and third year English

majors at the university were conducted. Finally, based on collected data and careful analysis, the study was accomplished.

## 5. Findings and discussion

Surveys were carried out to find out the current situation of using short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive in interpreting of English majors. This research methodology is used to assess the below issues:

- The current situation and students' awareness of STM in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.
- The practice of students to improve short-term memory
- The difficulties students facing with when practice short-term memory.
- The role of teachers in STM application for students' interpreting skill.

### 5.1 The current situation and students' awareness of STM in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.

*Question 1: What is average length of information that you can remember?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. a clause	37/45	82 %
B. a sentence	4/45	9 %
C. several sentences	4/45	9%
D. a paragraph	0/45	0%

Table 1: *The average length of information that can be remembered*

This question was given out to recognize the average length of information that students can remember. As the table 1 reveals that most students are able to remember full information of a clause which accounts for 82 %, while no one can keep in mind a paragraph. From one sentence to several sentences, few students can remember the information fully, which only account for the similar proportion (9%). From this table, it shows the STM ability of students. Students should pay more attention to short-term memory and the improvement is really in need.

*Question 2: Which percentage of information you can remember after the first listening?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 10%	8/45	18%
B. 20 – 50 %	33/45	74%
C. 70%	2/45	4%
D. 100%	0/45	0%
E. No answer	2/45	4%

*Table 2: Percentage of information remembered after the first listening*

The most noticeable finding is the answer B with 74% (33 out of 45 students). The average percentage of information that they can remember after first listening is from 20 to 50 %. Beside this number, there are 18% of participants remembering only 10% of content of the text, only 4% of them that can achieve 70% of information after first listening. It is understandable when there is no one can remember full content of the source language text.

It is surprising that 2 participants, accounting for 4% did not give their answer for this question. When being asked about this, they said that they did not give answer because they remember nothing after first listening.

Those proportions reflect the state that most of students cannot remember content of the source language text only with once listening. Meanwhile in the real context, the speaker will never repeat what he has said unless there are technical terms or cultural expression those needs to be explained.

*Question 3: Which percentage of information you can remember after the second listening?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 20 – 50%	12/45	27%
B. 50 – 70%	32/45	71%
C. 100%	1/45	2%

*Table 3: Percentage of information remembered after the second listening*

After the second listening, 71% of participants state that they can remember 50 – 70% of information, 15% of them can remember 27% of information and only 2% (1 student) can achieve full content of the source language text. In comparison with the first time of listening, percentage of information that students can remember increases. With this percentage, however, students have not been able to perform in the real interpreting context yet.

*Question 4: Which percentage of information you can remember after the third listening?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 20 – 50%	5/45	15%
B. 50 – 70%	38/45	85%
C. 100%	2/45	5%

*Table 4: Percentage of information remembered after the third listening*

It can be inferred from the table that after three times listening, most students can remember the given information with 85% (38 out of 45 students). Only %5 of participants state that they can obtain full information while 15% of them need practice more. Such students cannot achieve half of information in the third time of listening. From the proportion, it is necessary to practice more listening ability. To become a good interpreter, English majors at HPU really need work harder.

*Question 5: How long do you need to rearrange information before interpreting from English to Vietnamese?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 0s	0/45	0
B. 3-5s	6/45	14%
C. 5-15s	25/45	55%
D. About 1 minute	14/45	31%

*Table 5: Time need to rearrange information before interpreting*

The results of this question indicate the time that students require to rearrange and manage information before they interpret from English to Vietnamese. As the table shows, no one can immediately interpret without any preparation time. The duration of time varying from 3-5 only account for 14%. About over half of surveyed students need 5-15s to manage the information before interpreting. This duration is the most suitable because it is enough to give out target language utterance. Nearly one-third of them require about 1 minute rearranging ideas. Such students will be able to lose information due to too long period of time. From this proportion, it can be seen that the English majors at HPU have already made use of short-term memory during interpretation. However, they need improve more to achieve its best effectiveness.

*Question 6: How do you remember the information?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. Key words, numbers, figures, etc.	43/45	95%
B. Every word	0/45	0%
C. No answer	2/45	5%

*Table 6: Way of remembering the source information*

On the whole, most students (95%) find the effective way to remember information. They only remember the key words. However, 5% (2 out of 45 participants) do not know how to remember source information effectively; hence they chose “no answer”. There is no student choose “every word”. This shows that it is not a useful way to remember information. Of course, nobody can response exactly every word they’ve heard. In short, to become a real interpreter, English majors should practice more and promote their ability.

*Question 7: How long do you need to rearrange information before interpreting?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 1 – 3 seconds	3/45	7%
B. 4 – 5 seconds	16/45	35%
C. more than 5 seconds	26/45	58%

*Table 7: Time needed to rearrange information before interpreting*

The table 7 indicates the time that students need to rearrange information before interpreting. Most of the participants (58%) need more than 5 seconds to retrieve and arrange information before interpreting, followed by a time segment of 4 – 5 seconds with 27% of respondents. Number of students who need 1 – 3 seconds to rearrange information occupies the smallest proportion (7%)

As mentioned in the previous chapters, short-term memory in interpreting includes encoding of information from the source language, storing of information, retrieval of information and decoding of information into the target language. These stages happen quickly and continuously. Thus, spending more than 5 seconds for information rearrangement may cause the loss of information in interpreting. When students spend too much time to rearrange the former information, they will fail to process the new one. This shows that students are not successful in using their short-term memory to have quick response to the source text.

*Question 8: How can you evaluate at English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. 30%	10/45	22.5 %
B. 50%	25/45	55%
C. 70%	10/45	22.5%
D. 100%	0/45	0%

*Table 8: Self-evaluation of interpreting work*

This table shows how students value their results in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. No one feel confident enough to finish a total interpretation. About half of them think that they can complete 55% of the work. With the similar rate (22.5%), some better students can achieve about 70% while consecutively interpreting English to Vietnamese; whereas, some think that they can only accomplish one-third of the work. From collected figures, it can be inferred that interpreting is a hard subject and students haven't possessed enough skills including short-term memory to get the best result of interpreting work.

## 1.2 Students' practice to improve STM

*Question 9: How often do you practice to improve short-term memory?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. Always	4/45	9 %
B. Sometimes	20/45	45 %
C. Rarely	11/45	37 %
D. Never	4/45	9 %

*Table 9: The frequency of practice short-term memory*

It can be inferred from the result of Table 9 that the frequency students practice the short-term memory skill is so different. Nearly half of them notice the importance of this skill and sometimes practice for this. About 9% of participants seriously take care of short-term memory's role; whereas, the same number indicates that some are so lazy and not aware of short-term memory in interpretation. The proportion 37% should be alert; such students need to pay attention more to practice short-term memory. According to the collected data, it reveals that students haven't paid enough attention to practice short-term memory. Therefore, they should spend more time training short-term memory. Additionally, techniques need to be proposed to encourage them.



*Question 10: What sources of language (English) do you often listen to?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. CDs of text books	10/45	22.5%
B. VOA news	25/45	55%
C. Complex sources	10/45	22.5%

*Table 10: Kinds of source language (English) often listened to*

Table 10 shows some sources of English that students often listen to. As collected figures, about 55% of surveyed students listen to VOA news. This reveals that they seem to like listening to American voice with slow speed. Nearly one-fifth of students use CD of text book as their source language to interpret. With the same proportion, complex source accounts for 22.5%. Such students can have more chances in order to access to many accents of English from different regions. Knowing what sources of English students often listen to can understand their habits of listening. This suggests giving out techniques to help them improve listening ability and short-term memory.

### **1.3 Difficulties in practicing STM**

*Question 11: What are causes of your difficulties in short-term memory?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. Brain structure	4/45	8 %
B. External environment	13/45	28 %
C. Topic of source language	13/45	28 %
D. Your listening ability	15/45	36 %

*Table 11: Reasons for difficulties in short-term memory*

The table 11 illustrates the causes of difficulties that affect capacity of short-term memory. It is only about 8 % of students blame for their brain structure. While the proportion of listening ability accounts for 36 %. For the next reasons, external environment and topic of source language are at the same rate (28%). The students mostly realize that short-term memory is not a

physical problem. They fall into difficulties in short-term memory by such reasons that can be managed. To get advanced results, the English majors should pay attention to improve their listening skill as well as background knowledge such as vocabulary.

*Question 12: What types of information do you feel difficult to remember?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. Numbers, private names, dates	18/45	40
B. List of items	17/45	38
C. Signal/ Abbreviation	5/45	11
D. Terminology	5/45	11

*Table 12: Types of information causing difficulty to remember*

From the proportion, it reveals that students sometimes find it difficult to remember numbers, private names, dates and list of items with 40% and 38% of respondents respectively. In addition, 5 participants, accounting for 11%, have problem in remembering signal/abbreviation. The same proportion (11%) gets difficulty in remembering terminology. This finding shows that students should pay more attention to learn pronunciation of private names, practice memorizing numbers and dates more as well as enrich vocabulary on specific fields such as economy, instructions, ship building, etc.

#### **1.4 The role of teachers in STM application for students' interpreting skill**

*Question 13: How important are the teachers in improving students' memorizing skill?*

Answer	Choices	Percentage
A. Very important, as an instructor, a guider	28/45	62%
B. Only important in some cases	13/45	29%
C. Not very important, students make progress by themselves	4/45	9%

*Table 11: Teacher's role in improving students' memorizing skill*

Table 11 reveals that a considerable number of students (62%) highly appreciate the role of teacher in improving their memorizing skill. For them, teachers are very important, they play role as instructors, who give them valuable instructions to enhance their short-term memory skill.

Besides, that the teacher is only important in some cases is the assessment of 29% of respondents. There are also 4 students, accounting for 9% deny the role of teacher in improving their STM. For these students, teacher is not very important, they themselves make progress.

In short, from the proportion suggests that the teachers has play crucial role in helping students' short-term memory improvement.

## **6. Conclusion**

Thanks to the data collected from the survey, many current situations as well as useful information from English majors are given. Most students are aware of the role of short-term memory in interpreting. However, very few learners apply it effectively during interpretation, particularly English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. Some difficulties affecting interpreting also found out. Additionally, the realistic results of interpreting are directly revealed by learners themselves. Moreover, according to statistic on how frequencies the students spend time practicing short-term memory, it is possible to say that students should pay more attention to this skill. They need pay more time and work harder to achieve better results. Finally, the role of teachers in short-term memory improvement is recognized.

# CHAPTER IV: SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE SHORT-TERM MEMORY IN ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING

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## 1. Introduction

Short-term memory plays a very important role in achieving quality of interpreting process. Therefore, an interpreter not only prepares good background related to the issue but he/or she also needs to have a good short-term memory. With aim of helping learners improve their results of interpreting, I analyzed some useful techniques which can assist in training short-term memory in this chapter. It includes *listening improvement*, *memory training games*, *retelling in source language* and *mnemonic to memory*. They considerably help improve short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. Additionally, they can be references for further matter related to interpreting.

## 2. Techniques to improve short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting

### 2.1. Listening

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

Generally, listening skill is one of the most important skills in learning English. All professional interpreters or learners need to be good at listening skill. Many are really good at this skill; however, the practice of listening is never useless and enough to achieve high quality in interpreting.

If the interpreter cannot hear for a while, it will disturb him/her from receiving the next information. This means that the process of short-term memory is broken. Obviously, it will be difficult to give out utterance in target language. Improving listening will aid to increase short-term memory

capacity. Therefore, it is vital to consider listening improvement in order to enhance short-term memory.

### 2.1.2 What to pay attention

- pay attention to accent:

In fact, an interpreter has to interpret for many people coming from different countries, regions. Therefore, it is better to listen more and more with many sources of tape with various accents of men and women, the young and the old...Like Vietnamese, people coming from different parts of the country have their own accent and dialect. English is spoken by people all over the world; hence, the interpreter should get accustomed to listening to as many accents as possible.

- Distinguish similar sounds: in English, there are many words which seem to have similar sounds but differ in meaning. Here the reference lists:

Angel /'eɪndʒəl/ (n) = thiên thần	Angle /'æŋɡl/ (n) = góc (trong hình học)
Dessert /di'zɜ:t/ (n) = món tráng miệng	Desert /'dezət/ (n) = sa mạc
Later /'leɪtə/ (adv) = sau đó, rồi thì (thường dùng với động từ thời tương lai)	Latter/'lætə/ (adj) = cái thứ 2, người thứ 2, cái sau, người sau.
Affect /ə'fekt/ (v) = tác động đến	Effect /i'fekt/ (n) = ảnh hưởng, hiệu quả;
Emigrant /'emɪɡrənt/ (n) = người di cư	Immigrant /'ɪmɪɡrənt/ (n) = người nhập cư
Elude /i'lu:d/ (v) = tránh khỏi, lảng tránh, vượt ngoài tầm hiểu biết.	Allude /ə'lu:d/ (v) = nói đến ai/cái gì một cách rút gọn hoặc gián tiếp; ám chỉ; nói bóng gió
Complement /'kɒmplɪmənt/ (n) = bổ ngữ	Compliment /'kɒmplɪmənt/ (n) = lời khen ngợi
Secret /'si:krit/ = bí mật	Cigarette /,sɪɡə'ret/ = điều thuốc

- Pay attention to speed: in English - Vietnamese consecutive interpreting process, the duration of speech can vary from short to long (it is up to the speaker). However, in reality, it is continuously spoken out and consists of a huge of information. Therefore, to become a succeeded interpreter, it is valuable to get a good listening ability. Gradually expand speed of the speaker and then try to remember as much as possible. This not only broadens listening ability but also helps enhance memory skill.

### **2.1.3 Auditory short-term memory improvement**

#### **a. Comprehensive Listening**

This is a basic approach based on the utilization of audiotapes. The appropriateness of the tapes is determined by the individual as much as the input must be of high interest. However, we must develop function by playing tapes of different speeches associated with the increase of length and the variety of topics aimed to listeners' adjustment.

The purpose of this approach is to help listeners remember as much as possible. There is no pause or stop during listening process in order to attract concentration of listeners to encode information and summarize the content after.

#### Illustrated example 1:

*The windshield wiper was invented in 1930 by Mary Anderson, a woman from Alabama, USA. While Anderson was riding a street car during a trip to New York City, she noticed that the driver often had to get out to wipe snow from the windshield. She quickly drew an idea for mechanical windshield wiper in her sketchbook. Later she tried to sell her idea to a Canadian Company, but the company decided that the invention wouldn't be successful. Anderson gave up on trying to sell her invention and never made any money from it.*

(Cited from Let's Talk 2 – Leo Jones, page 179)

This text is quite short and simple. After listening to the text, the students are required to remember some main ideas:

- Topic: the invention of windshield wiper

- Inventor: Mary Anderson
- Year: 1903

Illustrated example 2:

*Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is Captain Anderson speaking. On behalf of myself and the crew, I'd like to welcome you on board this Air Magnesia flight to London. May I apologize for the short delay in our departure. This was caused by a problem with one of our tires but everything's all right now and we should be able to make up for the lost time. We shall be flying at an altitude of 30,000 feet and our estimated time of arrival is 19.30 local time. Weather condition are good but we may experience a little turbulence for the first 30 minutes so I would suggest you keep your safety belts fastened. During the flight, dinner will be served and our cabin crew will...*

*(Cited from Think first Certificate – Jonnaunton, page 176)*

This text is longer and contains more specific information than the previous one. Thus when listening to the text, students must pay more attention to the text to remember the main ideas of the text:

- Name of Captain: Anderson
- Name of the flight: Air Magnesia
- Event: short delay, the reason of delay, arrival time, etc.

**b. Intensive listening**

Another fundamental approach of auditory short - term memory training is intensive listening, that is, listening to specific information, then repeating the items as exact as possible. Due to the requirements of this method and short - term memory (maximum memory capacity of five to seven digits), the time duration shouldn't be too long and the conveyed meaning shouldn't be too complicated.

The purpose of this approach is to encourage the quick response to the received information and the accuracy of language expression. Only when

listeners can properly understand and recall what has been heard can they have an overview of the whole passage.

The simplest exercise of this approach is sequences of which five or six objects are listed in the tapes. At first, listeners are asked to repeat exactly what the list includes. More difficult, the sequence of these objects must be respected when named by the listeners.

Illustrated example 1:

*I spent the week with my grandparents in the country. They live um... on a big farm, and they have chickens and lost of animals and fruit trees and fresh vegetable, and it's really, really beautiful and peaceful when I was there. ...Um... the apples were in season, and we went picking . And the neighbors came, and they helped pick the apples, and we packed them, and it was so much fun. And then at the end of the day, my grandma would cook a big meal, and we would just sit around and eat and eat and talk, and everything was delicious. It was so good. And I thought I'd be bored because they don't have a TV or anything, but I wasn't. It was ...it was a lot of fun.*

(Cited from Let's Talk 2 – Leo Jones, page 165)

For this text, students are asked to use their STM to remember the list of things. It is quite easy because there are not many things in the list and they are gathered in a sentence.



### Illustrated example 2:

*I know a man who is very fond of food. In fact, he can eat more food than anyone else I know. His name is Bill and he is quite fat. Bill's problem is that he likes to eat a lot of food but he does not like to work.*

*One morning, Bill was out in the country when he met a farmer.*

*"Are you looking for a work?", asked the farmer.*

*"Yes", said Bill because he was very hungry and had no money to buy food.*

*"Alright", said the farmer, "you can come and work for me".*

*"Just a moment", said Bill. "First I must have a good lunch."*

*"Well", said the farmer, "What would you like?"*

*"Vegetable soup", said Bill, "to start with".*

*"Anything else?" asked the farmer.*

*"Yes, I'd like a big steak and peas, and lots of potatoes", Bill went on hungrily.*

*"Is that all?", asked the farmer.*

*"Almost", said Bill, "I'd like to finish with a nice cup of tea and a big bit of cake".*

*"Listen", said the farmer, "you don't need a job, you need a restaurant."*

(Cited from Let's Listen – John McClintock and Borje Stern, page 68)

This text is more challenging to the students to remember the list of things because the list contains more things and they are sparse. The list consists of *vegetable soup, big steak, peas, lots of potatoes, nice cup of tea, big bit of cake*.

**Note:** This suggestion is useful for students. They should practice at home to gradually improve their STM memory skill. However, it also can be applied at class by each student independently. If learners practice this technique frequently, they will receive significant improvement in interpreting exercises.

## 2.2. Memory training games

### 2.2.1 Making up story

The game introduced below is very easy and interesting to follow. It helps improve your short-term memory. This game is useful in class with many learners.

*How to play:*

- The teacher or team leader read this short poem to players:  
Johnny went to the market. Johnny went to the store.  
But when poor Johnny got there, he forgot what he went there for.  
Momma gave him a list. Momma gave it to him twice.  
And what Momma wanted was a big bag of rice...
  - Now, pick one player say "Momma wanted a bag of *rice and carrots*."
  - The next partner has to repeats that and adds another item, "Momma wanted *rice and carrots and a cake*."
  - The next turn will be "Momma wanted *rice, carrots, cake and a tulip*."
- Take turns until someone gets an item out of order or forgets an item. Make it fun by adding items such as a *football* or *alligators*.

The above is sample game, the players can choose different topics to remember more vocabulary related to the topic they are willing to interpret.

### 1.2.2 Matching pair

This is a really interesting game that helps the players have an active STM.

*How to play:*

- *The instructor prepares 12 cards. Each card contains a number. Noting that 12 cards consist of 6 matched pairs. Numbers include 34, 43, 25, 52, 67, 76.*
- *Then face down the cards in disorder so that the players do not remember the location of numbers. One will turn over one card to see the number and then face it down again. Continue to turn over the cards to find out a matched pair.*
- *Repeat this process until the final pair is found.*

This exercise is very helpful in improving ability to remember number and location. The students can practice more by increasing number of card (from 12 to 24, 30, 36) or increasing the number in the cards like 232, 322, etc. to further improve their STM. To check STM improvement, students can count the time they spent to complete the game. We can replace cars by numbers and colors to attract students' interest.

**Note:** Memory training games will assist to achieve great improvement in STM. These games can be applied as a part of activities in interpreting lessons. Because they are forms of game, group work is the most suitable to applied this technique. They are also suggestions for teachers to make interpreting lessons more effective and funny. Students, of course, can use them at home with other friends.

### 2.3. Retelling in source language (English)

This methods is very useful, the students should practice them every day. It is more effective to use some aids such as phones. It is better to record and then listen to your own voice.

- Prepare a text with 100-200 words. It's up to your ability. You can gradually increase amount of words. Remember to get mp3 file, you can access to voanews.com. Listen to the source text some times, if your listening ability is not really well, you can read the text.
- Retell the text as the same the original one as possible. At first, you may not remember much information. But don't worry; the time will bring the expected result.
- Now, listen again your retelling and compare.

#### 2.3.1. Generalization

As a feature of spoken language, speakers sometimes speak too long or too specific which may cause information loss of interpreters. Therefore, this technique is applied to draw general conclusions from particular examples or messages from provided text but still convey the full meaning.

Besides, such omission can be permitted when the received information is well-known or repeated in the same passage. Generalization is also needed for listeners to sum up the ideas or speech delivered by the speaker.

Illustrated sample:

*Farmers and gardeners have turned the soil for centuries. But many now believe in no-till or reduced tillage, a method also called conservation tillage. The Conservation Technology Information Center says forty percent of American cropland used this method at last report.*

*Tilling can remove weeds and the waste from last season's crops and help break down old plant material into fertilizer. But it can also increase the risk of soil erosion by rain or wind.*

*Tilling also releases carbon dioxide from the soil into the atmosphere. No-till keeps carbon in the soil and avoids the release of heat-trapping gases from motorized equipment. It also keeps water in the soil and protects helpful organisms like earthworms. And it saves money on labor, machinery and fuel.*

*Source: voamews.com*

The speaker tells about advantages of tilling, facilitating short - term memory in such context needs the technique of generalization:

*Advantages of tilling:*

- *Remove weeds a waste*
- *Releases Co2*
- *Keep water in soil*

**2.3.2. Categorization**

This technique concentrates on grouping items of the same properties to help interpreters find out the link/ relation between items and the logical order or sequence which are needed to remember easier.

Illustrated sample:

*European governments are dealing with a different issue linked to immigration and population growth. Racial and ethnic tensions are increasing in some European countries. This issue intensified last year in France when hundreds of young Arab and African men rioted. They were protesting against economic inequality and the failure of French society to accept them. Many rioters were the children of immigrants who had moved from countries like Algeria and Tunisia in the nineteen fifties and sixties.*

*The population of Europe is also aging faster than any other part of the world, except Japan. Birth rates are also down in many European countries. Experts say the number of people depending on workers will rise as the number of workers falls. They say spending in European countries will have to increase for retirement, health care and long-term care for old people in the future.*

*Source: voanews.com*

There are two sub-topics in the passage, in order to facilitate short-term memory in such context needs the technique of categorizations:

- Immigration:

*Racial and ethnic tensions*

+ *Issue: A riot in France*

+ *Reasons:*

. *Economic equality*

. *Failure of society acceptance*

- Population Growth:

+ *Issue: Aging faster*

+ *Impacts: More spending on:*

. *Retirement,*

. *Health care*

. *Long –term care for old people*

### 2.3.3. Comparison

When the speaker lists some objects in detailed, interpreters may find it difficult to follow, thus problems with target-language expression and accuracy are raised. In support of interpreters in such situation, comparison technique is suggested, that is, interpreters should notice differences and similarities between different things, facts and events to help short - term memory distinguish the features of separated objects and rearrange these objects into categories .

#### Illustrated sample:

*Many people around the world are trying to create new kinds of businesses. Entrepreneurs organize, build and support their business proposals. They may have ideas about new products. Or, they may have ideas about new ways to do business.*

*Social entrepreneurs are similar to business entrepreneurs. However, social entrepreneurs try to improve conditions in their communities. They organize, build, and support new and creative projects. Their goal is to improve people's lives. Their work is very important. Usually, social entrepreneurs do not receive much support for their work. However, the World Bank is trying to change this. The bank recognizes the need for social entrepreneurs and has developed a special program to offer them support.*

*Source: voanews.com*

The speaker indicated two kinds of businesses; hence, interpreters should put them into comparison to improve short - term memory:

Criteria	Private entrepreneurs	Social entrepreneurs
Performance	<i>organize, build and support their business proposals</i>	<i>organize, build, and support new and creative projects</i>
Goal	<i>products Living conditions</i>	

#### **2.3.4 Description**

Description language is one of the challenges interpreters facing when doing their job. Actually, it is very hard for interpreters to use short - term memory to passively encode source-language description without adding or modifying some minor details.

In other words, interpreters should use this technique in describing a scene, a shape, or size of an object and the usage of their own words in such tasks is encouraged to make the interpretation more vivid and persuasive.

Illustrated sample:

*Java volcano activity increases. Thousands of people living in villages closest to the volcano have already been moved to emergency shelters. Many more are lining up by the side of the road waiting for trucks to take them to safety. But still there are a few farmers refusing to move. Without their crops and animals they have no income and cannot support their families so they're waiting until the government offers financial help. Meanwhile, the mountain above them is becoming more active by the day. At least one village about three kilometres from the crater has been covered in a dusting of volcanic ash. One scientist told the BBC he now believed Merapi was in what he called the early stages of an eruption but he added 'we cannot predict when it will reach its peak'.*

*Source: voanews.com*

The passage briefly described an event. However, due to the description language, interpreters should take their own way of expression to revise the “picture in words”:

- Event:

*Merapi mount. – volcano activities*

- Scene:

*The activation of the mountain -> volcanic ash covers a three-far-away village*

- People:

+ *Evacuation:*

. *Some already moved to emergency shelters*

. *Some waiting for transportation toward safe areas*

+ *Stay: Few farmers with crops and animals waiting for financial support.*

**Note:** Retelling in source language (English) are very practical ways to improve STM and it can be used whenever students interpret. Like listening



improvement, they will offer more benefit if students practice frequently. Each student should apply these techniques independently.

#### **2.4. Mnemonic to Memory**

Mnemonic to memory is another effective suggestion to improve STM. In broad term, mnemonic is a device such as a formula or rhyme, procedure or operation used as aids in remembering. In narrow term, Scrugg and Mastropieri define “a mnemonic is a specific construction of target content intended to the new information more closely to the learner’s existing knowledge base and, therefore, facilitate retrieval”.

Mnemonics are methods for remembering information that is otherwise quite difficult to recall. There are varieties of mnemonic techniques, including keywords, peg words, acronyms, loci method, spelling mnemonic, phonetic mnemonic, etc. the basic principle of Mnemonics is to use as many of the best functions of the human brain as possible to encode information.

There are several mnemonic techniques, as mentioned above; however, five following techniques are usually used to facilitate memory.

(1) Acronyms: are formed by using each first letter from a group of word to form a new word. This technique is particularly effective when remembering words in a specified order. Acronyms are very common in ordinal language and in many fields. Some examples of acronyms include NBA (National Basketball Association), LASER ( Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation), etc.

(2) Sentence/ Acrostics: Like acronyms, the first letter of each word is the subject to remember. However, in acrostics technique, these letters are used to make a sentence. For example, you have to remember a list of words (Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Genus, Species) which are not related to each other. You’ll pick up such letters KPCOGS and then make a sentence like: *Kings Phil Came Over for the Genes Special* that easier for you to remember. Acrostics technique is helpful when remembering a list in a specific order. Moreover, this is less limiting than acronyms. Because if your

words do not form easy-to-remember acronyms, using acrostics may be preferable.

(3) Rhymes and songs: Rhyme, repetition, melody and rhythm can all aid memory. This is reason why people in ancient time when there is no writing can remember long stories and poems. The use of rhyme, rhythm and repetition helps the story teller remember and helps too stimulate STM. Following is the poem “30 day hath September”, a simple example of mnemonic:

*30 days hath September  
Thirty days hath September,  
April, June and November;  
February has twenty eight alone,  
All the rest have thirsty one,  
Excepting leap year that the time  
When February's days are twenty-nine.*

(4) Method of Loci: This technique is really useful to remember speeches with unrelated items. Using this technique requires the combination of organization, visual memory, and association. The principle of the technique is that the trainees associate each part of what they have to remember with a landmark in a route you know well and then create a vivid visual memory of the “path” and objects along it, after that visualize it when interpreting. Following is an example of this technique.

*My own place list is a window in the kitchen, the microwave oven, the sink, the stove, the refrigerator, the front door, the television and so on. Now, I can't normally remember a list of three things by the time I get to the grocery. If, however, I imagine wads of toilet paper hitting the window, dish soap boiling in the microwave, cucumbers dancing in the sink, potato chips burning on the stove, and the refrigerator full of magazines.*

(5) Chunking: This technique is useful for remembering numbers. It is formed base on the idea that STM capacity limits vary from about 4 to about 9 items. When using “chunking” to remember, users decrease the

number of items held in memory by increasing the size of each item. For example, to remember a phone number like 64831996, you create "chunks" of numbers by breaking that number string into small string as 64, 83, 19, 96. Thus, instead of remembering 8 individual numbers, you are remembering 4 large numbers.

**Note:** It is better for students to improve their STM capacity when they apply mnemonic to memory. Learners can practice this technique independently at home or in class, especially in speeches which include a serial of number or long scientific term, etc.

To sum up, short-term memory is a very important skill for excellent interpreters. Some possess this natural ability, but it can be improved day by day by the. The mentioned suggestions give learners some ways to enhance their ability in short-term memory process. Finally, it will bring about better result in interpreting lessons.

# CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION FOR LEARNING AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

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## 1. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the techniques and application of short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting. The current state of implementing this skill of English majors at HPU is presented. In this study, some shortcomings of students were pointed out. Furthermore, the role of short-term memory is emphasized. With all efforts, several techniques were introduced to help learners achieve better results in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting as well as other interpretation works.

Initially, theoretical background of interpreting and short-term memory was provided. Basing on this foundation, the study on short-term memory in English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting was implemented with English majors who have learnt interpreting lessons at the University. After that, some methods for training short-term memory skill which seem to be suitable with factual state of the learners were analyzed.

Moreover, the author do hope that this document would be understandable and readable for students who have studied interpreting subject. In order to bring about a useful referential document for English majors at HPU, the writer of this study has spent much time working with heartfelt spirit.

However, due to the time constraints, the humble experience and knowledge of the author, shortcomings are unavoidable. It only focuses on one mode of memory and one aspect of interpreting.

## **2. Implication for learning and suggestions for further study**

Firstly, the study helps students recognize the demand and importance of short-term memory in interpreting. With useful information, this document is helpful for every English majors, particularly who are learning interpreting subject. After reading this paper, the students can apply some suggestions that can improve their short-term memory, especially in term of English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting.

Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction part, there aren't many documents of interpreting skill in our university library. This study can be a suggestion and reference for further researchers who will build up more useful documents for English majors. I hope that the next researchers will deal with more techniques to improve short-term memory in interpreting or some related issues such as long-term memory and so on.

In short, this is a readable document and I am looking forward to hearing feedbacks from all readers including English majors and teachers at Faculty of Foreign Languages.

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# Appendix 1

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

*Hoang Thi Thanh Van's Survey on the factual awareness and using short-term memory in interpreting of English majors at HPU*

**Circle the answers that fit you most:**

 **English is considered to be the source language in all questions**

*Question 1: What is average length of information that you can remember?*

- A. a clause  
B. a sentence  
C. 2-3 sentence  
D. a paragraph

*Question 2: Which percentage of information you can remember after the first listening?*

- A. 10%  
B. 20 – 50 %  
C. 70%  
D. 100%  
E. No answer

*Question 3: Which percentage of information you can remember after the second listening?*

- A. 20 – 50%  
B. 50 – 70%  
C. 100%

*Question 4: Which percentage of information you can remember after the third listening?*

- A. 20 – 50%  
B. 50 – 70%  
C. 100%

*Question 5: How long do you need to rearrange information before interpreting from English to Vietnamese?*

- A. 0s  
B. 3-5s  
C. 5-15s  
D. About 1 minute

Question 6: *How do you remember the information?*

- A. Key words, numbers, figures, etc.
- B. Every word
- C. No answer

Question 7: *How long do you need to rearrange information before interpreting?*

- A. 1 – 3 seconds
- B. 4 – 5 seconds
- C. more than 5 seconds

Question 8: *How can you evaluate at English to Vietnamese consecutive interpreting?*

- E. 30%
- F. 50%
- G. 70%
- H. 100%

Question 9: *How often do you practice to improve short-term memory?*

- E. Always
- F. Sometimes
- G. Rarely
- H. Never

Question 10: *What source of language (English) do you often listen to?*

- D. CD of text book
- E. VOA news
- F. Complex sources

Question 11: *what are causes of your difficulties in short-term memory?*

- E. Brain structure
- F. External environment
- G. Topic of source language
- H. Your listening ability



Question 12: *What types of information do you feel difficult to remember?*

- A. Numbers, private names, dates
- B. List of items
- C. Signal/ Abbreviation
- D. Terminology

Question 13: *How important are the teachers in improving students' memorizing skill?*

- A. Very important, as an instructor, a guider
- B. Only important in some cases
- C. Not very important, students make progress by themselves

**Thank you for your co-operation!**

# Appendix 2

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## **Useful websites to test short-term memory**

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/stm0.html>

<http://neutralx0.net/home/mini04.html>

<http://www.intelligencetest.com/report/short-term-memory.htm>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Increase-Your-Short-Term-Memory>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Increase-Your-Short-Term-Memory>

# Appendix 3

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## Tips to increase your short term memory

Your ability to store information in short term memory is affected by many things. Depression and anxiety for instance often affect your concentration and stress can also make you feel "scattered" and jumpy. Marijuana users also experience subtle short term memory deficits that continue for at least six weeks after their last usage.

Generally if short term memory tries to acquire more items than it can handle, the middle items will often be displaced.

Chunking of information can lead to an increase in short term memory capacity. This is the reason why a hyphenated phone number is easier to remember than a single long number. Storage also seems to increase if we pronounce the names of the items out loud especially if they are grouped rhythmically.

**Try reading this sequence and then recall it:**

i g d b f d n o n u c a

**Next, try the same exercise on these letters:**

c o u n f b a d d i n g

**Chunking it into a word you can pronounce made the difference.**

**Try the same process with this list of numbers:**

2 8 3 4 9 6

**Next, try remembering this:**

28 34 96 Instead of six numbers, you only need to recall three.

# Appendix 4

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## **How to Increase Your Short Term Memory**

Short term memory is your current memory, the one you are working with right now that is helping you read this article and make sense of it. If your short term memory is on the blink, it is time for corrective action.

**Use flash cards.** Flash cards and memory card games are really good for sprucing up the mental synapses and making your memory work harder. Play a few of these games daily to keep your memory in top shape. Use flash cards to help you learn for tests, exams and other memory-reliant challenges.

**Do online exercises that strengthen memory.** There are a number of online exercises that help you practice memory strengthening. Just search using your favorite search engine, provided you remember which one. If not, Google is a good bet.

**Understand what makes your memory work.**

**Do test games.** Short term memory is the memory that retains information for short periods of time. Lay out a number of objects on a tray. Try to memorize them. Place a cloth over the tray and write down every object that you remember. Check back and see how you did. If you did too well, add more objects. This game is a good one to do at least weekly to shape up your recall abilities.

**Use acronyms to help you remember a list of names.** For example, ROY G BIV (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet) stands for each color of the rainbow.

# Appendix 5

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## Memorization Techniques for Consecutive Interpreting

1. Your short-term memory capacity is normally limited to between five and nine bits of information (units of memory), and your ability to recall depends on how well you can organize what you have heard by finding patterns. Have someone read a series of seven unrelated numbers to you. As soon as you are able to repeat the series accurately, try to repeat it backwards. To do this, you must be able to retain the series in your short-term memory.

2. Increase your analytical skills by reading a newspaper or magazine. After finishing each story, try to summarize what you read in a single sentence. Do this in all your working languages.

3. Try exercise 2 after listening to a news report or a radio or television talk show.

Summarize the main idea in a single sentence.

4. For the exercises below, have someone read a newspaper or magazine article into a recorder, or record talk or interview programs from the radio or television. Limit yourself to non-technical material. Do not record the news, because the newscaster reads from a prepared script. Record increasingly longer texts as your skills improve.

You will only repeat the information you hear in the same language and will not interpret it.

a. Listen to the passage without taking notes and try to repeat as much as possible.

b. Listen to the passage and write down key words to help you remember the content. Then repeat as much information as possible. Compare the results you achieved with and without notes. Which worked best for you?

c. As you listen to the passage, try to condense it into a few meaningful units. Organize the information into groups. For example, if a person were to list the schools she had attended and the subjects she studied, you could group

the schools by location and the subjects studied by topic. Numbers can be grouped the way people recite phone or social security numbers, in groups of two, three, or four numbers, rather than as a string of unrelated numbers. Please note that when interpreting testimony you should maintain the speaker's word sequence as spoken, except to accommodate the syntax of the target language