Exploring Problems Experienced by Studnets in Interpreting Practices

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Abstract

Living in a multicultural nation like in Indonesia, the existence of interpreting is important for people to exchange information to upgrade their knowledge nowadays. In order to do that, the use of English as an international language is essential. However, there is constraint in doing it, which is language barrier. In fact, some people might not understand English because they do not learn or speak it. In Indonesia, this might happen since English is not their daily language. This study aimed to know the problems experienced by students in interpreting practices. The data were collected from three students of batch 2013 and they were selected based on their score of consecutive interpreting practices, one of assessments used in the English department at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta to assess students' interpreting skill. Moreover, the researcher applied descriptive qualitative to describe the result of data. To obtain the data, the researcher used interview as the research instrument. Specifically, the data were analyzed using three steps, namely transcribing, member checking and coding. Hence, the data collected revealed that there were eight categories of the problems faced by the students in consecutive interpreting practices. There are the categories of the problems such as lacking focus, listening to source language, translating words and numbers in a short time, speed of the source language, note taking, memorizing the words, decoding note, lacking knowledge of symbols, and lacking vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: Problems, consecutive interpreting, students' perception.

1.   Introduction

People need to exchange information to upgrade their knowledge nowadays. Such information exchange can take place among people around the world. In order to do that, the use of English as an international language is essential. However, there is constraint in doing it, which is language barrier. In fact, some people might not understand English because they do not learn or speak it. In Indonesia, this might happen since English is not their daily language. For instance, a tourist and a seller communicate to offer price to buy something but they do not understand each other due to their languages. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding among them, it is important to use the service of interpreter.

Based on the researcher's experience and observation when taking the interpreting course, most of students felt nervous when they did the practices of the interpreting course. The interpreting practices included simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. In fact, most of students had some problems when they did consecutive interpreting practices in which the interpreters use the note taking and interprets the whole performance of original speech in different language. Evidently, Phelan (2001) argued, "The interpretation is not summary; it is whole performance of original the speech in a different language" (p. 9). In the class of consecutive interpreting practices, there were some of the students who did not interpret some utterances they listened and there were some students who did not interpret all words that they heard from the video. The students even said that the assessments were not easy to do in the consecutive interpreting practices.

2.   Review of the Literature

2.1   Definition of Interpreting

Some experts describe about the definition of interpreting. The experts have their own arguments in describing interpreting, but the whole arguments basically have the same and different content idea. According to Phelan (2001), interpreting takes place when someone

translates orally what he or she listens in to different language. Besides, Pochhacker (2004) stated interpreting is performed 'here and now' for the benefits of people who want to engage in communication across barrier of language and culture. In addition, Petrescu (2014) asserted interpreting/Interpretation is commonly as oral translation and perceived as a more or less mechanical activity consisting in a series of encoding and decoding operations.

2.2   *Problems in Consecutive interpreting*

Listening and Understanding. During the listening phases, there are some problems that have been found. The first is about lack of understanding. Then, there are numbers, speed of delivery, general topic, and unfamiliar topic. In addition, the clarity of sound, length of the speech, information density, lack of practices, and lack of concentration also found in consecutive interpreting practices (Ribas, 2012). In addition, speed is the time gap between what the speaker aims to say and what the interpreter listens and what the interpreter eventually produces. It is ideal for the interpreter to speed up with the speaker but not very often attainable because no interpreter, no matter how strong and extended his memory capacity is, interpreters can accumulate the exact words uttered by the speaker (Nosratzadegan, 2014).

Note-taking. The speed of delivery is not only the problem in listening and understanding but also in note taking process. According to Ribas (2012), as regard to note-taking, the speed of delivery of the original speech is the major problem in consecutive interpreting practices. For example, their writing is not unclear and unrelated to interpret the speech on source language to target language. Furthermore, the problem is the lack of understanding of the original speech as directly influencing quality of note-taking process. Note-taking is related to problem with the number, the source of speech, and the speed of delivery context, what the interpreter understands. Also, the problem of note-taking is the lack of practices.

Moreover, consecutive interpreting notes are unnecessary to cover all of the information contained in the source language speech, but importantly provide as a reminder to help the

interpreter recovers the information stated in memory. However, memory means the interpreter listens to the information of a speech and then reproduces it in other languages. It means that the interpreter must be able to paraphase main idea; they must remember the words within their memory (Nosratzadegan, 2014). In addition, Chen (2016) stated that, note taking is noting the ideas and note the word, when the interpreters should get there at the essential sense through analysis and understanding of the source language.

Decoding Notes. When the interpreter has the note then the interpreter decodes his/her own note to deliver of the speech. The interpreter faced the problems when decoding his note. The problems are such as the interpreter's lack of connecters, unclear note, and memory problems. Also, decoding notes still make interpreters confused in interpreting the speech (Ribas, 2012).

Expressing and Reformulating. According to Ribas (2012) stated that most of the problems are doing expression in the target language. Usually, the interpreters feel nervous and lack confidence when they are interpreting the speech. Sometimes, the problems still occur which is related to the overuse of connecter in the context of note.

To sum up, the explanation above is, based on the research of the problems in consecutive interpreting practices. There are listening and understanding, note-taking, decoding notes, and expressing and reformulating, memorizing the words, and having speed in the problems faced by students when in doing consecutive practice. From those problems, note taking is the same difficulty which found by Ribas, Nosratzadegan, and Chen.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participant

In this research, the participants were selected from students of the English Department especially batch 2013 who have taken the Interpreting course, and experienced the practice of consecutive interpreting. Interpreting course was offered for students in the seventh semester as one of the elective courses. Moreover, the researcher chose three participants in order to

obtain the data of this research. The researcher had the characteristic to select the participants. Those three participants were chosen based on the score, and they were students with high score, average score, and low score in consecutive interpreting assessment. The reason of choosing that category was for getting rich data from three participants. Therefore, the researcher has varieties of problems from each participant from the different background of score.

3.2 Instrument

In collecting the data, the researcher employed an interview that was associated with the qualitative research. Interview was the activity of conversation between the researcher and the participants to collect the data in the research. Harrel and Bradley (2009) argued that interview is a discussion between an interviewer and an interviewee to collect information on a particular set of issues.

3.3 Data Analysis

In the data analysis, the researcher analyzed the data after the researcher did an interview with the participant. The researcher transcribed the recording after the statements was recorded in the interview, and the researcher transcribed the data into written text without adding any information. The researcher transcribed each word from audio recording which is usually defined as data verbatim. Then, the researcher verified to the participants, which was called member checking in order to keep the data valid. By doing member checking, the validity of the data that were obtained from the participants was checked.Then, the researcher took, and interpreted the datafrom the participants in the study, so the researcher can confirm the reliability of the information, and the researchers thoroughly check the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). It was an important thing to verify findings validity. Then, researcher analyzed the written text through the process ofcoding of the data after doing member checking. Cohen (2011) argued that "Coding is the ascription of a category label to a piece of data that is either

decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected" (p. 559). There were several category labels of color, and each label of color in the statements were different; there were yellow, green, turquoise, pink, blue, red, and grey based on the theme of coding.

4. Discussion

In this part, the researcher discusses the result of the interview that are related to the research question, namely "what are the problems faced by students in consecutive interpreting practices?" From the data that have been analyzed, it was revealed that there are ninth problems experienced by students in consecutive interpreting practices.

4.1 Students' lack of focus on the source language.

In the consecutive interpreting, the students were given a video in English language. They had to listen to the video and the students were asked to discuss the video, and then interpreted it. In this situation, they did not pay attention properly on the video so that they could not interpret very well. In listening to the video, concentration is needed. It is in line with Ribas (2012) who said that most of the students during the listening session, they have lack of attention or loss of concentration. This opinion is strengthened by Goh (2000) who stated that the problem of concentrating as common problem faced by students so they quickly missed what is heard.

4.2 Students' lack of practice.

Evidently, in consecutive interpreting practices, the student did not pay attention on the video because he has lack of practice in listening skill. This finding was in line with Ribas (2016) who argued that the problem is related to the lack of practices in listening during consecutive interpreting practices. Additionally, the problem that may be faced by the student depends on the practices that they have in listening to the source language to target language (Yilmaz &Yavuz, 2015).

4.3 Students' difficulty in translating words and numbers in a short time.

In other words, the student has a problem in getting the point when she practiced consecutive interpreting in short time. It supported Seedhouse's research result (2004) who proposed that limited time is obstructed for learner's participation and learning chances in form-and-accuracy and meaning-and-fluency in contexts. It happened when the student listened to the speaker, and mentioned about the number; she could not deliver the whole number because she has the limited time to interpret the content completely.

4.4 Students' difficulty in the speed of the source language.

Those participants showed that they cannot get the point in the video since the speed of speaker is very fast in consecutive interpreting practices. Those statements were in line with Nosratzadegan (2014) who claimed that speed is the time gap between what the speaker aims to say and what the interpreter listens and what the interpreter eventually produces. It is ideal for the interpreter to speed up with the speaker but not very often attainable because no interpreter, no matter how strong and extended his memory capacity is, interpreters should be able to accumulate the exact words uttered by the speaker. Accordingly, the students did not interpret the words clearly in consecutive interpreting practices.

4.5 Students' problem in note taking process.

These findings in line with Ribas (2012) who argued that Note-taking is related to problem with the number, the source of speech, the speed of delivery context what the interpreter understands, and the lack of practices. Furthermore, the problem is the lack of understanding of the original speech as directly influencing quality of note-taking process.

4.6 Students' lack of memorizing the words.

This finding was related to Garretson (1981) who stated that "the students have a long term memory but if they faced the time limited it is very difficult to memorize too much of the words during consecutive interpreting" (p. 244). On the other hand, Pochhacker (2004) also proposed

that short-term processing is needed in consecutive interpreting to catch up the point in the target language and leaving gaps.

4.7 Students' problem in decoding their notes.

These findings indicated that the problems of the student were they forgot and did not understand when he wrote on their note; thus, he found difficulties to decode his notes. According to Ribas (2012) when the interpreter has the note, the interpreter needs to decode their own note to deliver the speech. The interpreter faced the problems when decoding his note. The problems are like the interpreter lacks of connectors, unclear note, and memory problems. Also, the interpreter still confused in decoding notes that may be occurred in consecutive interpreting.

4.8 Students' lack of knowledge about symbol.

The other statement is from Andrew, he felt difficult to create symbol and he was giving an example of his symbols. He asserted that, "I felt difficult in writing the points; I am afraid since I do not really comprehend and understand it because it can make the points less accurate and less detail" (P3. 4). The example of symbol was, "for I disagree, I created a symbol like (X)" (P3. 5). Another example was, "in note taking, I don't really comprehend the standard symbols. I only used my own symbols, for example (±) for more less, (≠) means not equal, and (☼) for opinion" (P3. 7). In the following statement, by Ann, she said that, "Sometimes I forgot about the symbol that I wrote."(P1.3). Hence, the findings were acknowledged by Phelan (2001) who asserted that the interpreter feels hard to make symbols during the consecutive interpreting as the technique of note taking.

4.9 Students' lack of vocabulary in interpreting practices.

Based on the statements above, Helen listened to Indonesian language as the source language and Andrew listened to English language as the source language in this context. These findings is in line with Burdah (2004) who said that the students found the difficulty in interpreting the

foreign language because they did not know the vocabulary and it can be forgotten easily if the students did not speak that language. In addition, it was supported that the students are limited by their knowledge on grammar and vocabulary of the source language to the target language and difficult to understand the content (Chung, 2016).

5. Conclusion

This research found that the kinds of the probelm faced by students in interpreting practices has answered the research question. It was shown that, there were ninht findings of the problems faced by students in consecutive interpreting practices. First,the problem was the students' lack of focuson the source language. The students did not pay attention to the video so the students missed the points during consecutive interpreting pratices. Second the problem was the student has lack of practice. When the student listened to the video, the student did not get the point because the student had lack of practice in listening to source language. Third, the problem was the students cannot translate the words and the numbers in a short time. The students found it difficult to interpret numbers mentioned by the speaker, particularly he/she speaks fast. Additionally, when the student translated numbers, they missed one word in consecutive intepreting practices.

Fourth,the students were related to speed of the speakers in the source language. The students cannot get the points when they listened to the source language. Fifth, the students were unable to write the note properly because they forgot what they wrote. Sixth, the problem was students cannot memorize the words in consecutive interpreting practices. Then, the students felt hard to memorize the words of what speaker talked about. Seventh, the students have the problems in decoding note. When they wrote the point in the note, they did not understand what they wrote so they did not interpret completely. Eighth, the students lack knowledge of symbols. Sometimes, they did not really understand their symbol because they created a symbol by

themselves. The last problem is the student's lack of vocabulary when they interpret the words, they found unfamiliar words.

From the conclusion, it can be implied that to be an interpreter they should improve some points, especially from English to Indonesia. The first is the interpreter should have more practice in doing consecutive interpreting. Secondly, the interpreter should focus or concentrate in listening to the source language. Thirdly, the interpreter also should enrich their vocabulary mastery. Last but not least, the interpreter should be able to create or understand the symbols in order to take the points easily in the note taking process.

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