# THE CONSTRAINTS IN PERFORMING SIGHT TRANSLATION: A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING ENGLISH WRITTEN TEXTS INTO INDONESIAN ORAL TEXTS

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***Abstract***

*Oral translation, commonly called interpreting, is a verbal communication activity involving two parties speaking different languages, assisted by an interpreter. One mode of interpreting is simultaneous interpreting in which an interpreter delivers a source language (SL) message into a target language (TL) message simultaneously as the speaker's statement proceeds (Nolan 3). One specific kind of simultaneous interpreting is sight translation. It is a form interpreting a written SL message into a spoken TL message (Ginori&Scimone 18).*

*Although the SL message is written, this does not lessen the constraints of doing this job because the simultaneousness of this activity still demands the interpreters' ability in working using two languages at the same time, as well as having the skills required for an interpreter. What is meant by constraints is performance constraints (Pochhacker 19) as the result of time limitation, the demand for the interpreter's promptness and the accuracy of message transferred.*

*This paper intends to observe the constraints in performing sight translation. For that purpose, this paper is going to explain the constraints experienced by interpreters when they are carrying out sight translation tasks. Since Interpreting class is available as a subject given at the English Letters Department, Sanata Dharma University, the data were obtained from the students of an Interpreting class who were assigned to perform sight translation. To limit the scope of discussion, the sight translation observed has been focused on the oral translation of English written texts into Indonesian spoken interpretation.*

***Keywords:*** *Interpreting, Sight Translation, Constraints*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although English has been used as a means of verbal communication worldwide. It does not mean that people coming from different parts of the world will immediately speak English fluently. In many occasions, translators or interpreters are still needed to help people speaking different languages communicate with each other. Translators work on the translation of written texts, while in the context of conversation, the presence of an interpreter is required.

Seeing the fact, the role of translators or interpreters has become very important. However, considering that to be a translator or interpreter, that person must be proficient in using both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) (Ginori and Scimone11), there are some questions that could be raised concerning the translators' and interpreters' competence in delivering messages from an SL to a TL.

This paper intends to discuss aspects related to interpreting. Besides the skills required to be able to perform the task, the problems and constraints encountered by interpreters are also worth discussing. To limit the scope, this paper will focus on the discussion of problems and constraints encountered by interpreters, especially those who are still in the early steps of practicing interpreting.

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This paper is a result of a research conducted in an interpreting class. The purpose of choosing an interpreting class instead of a more authentic setting is create a context which designed to fulfill the requirements for this research. First, the people involved are the learners who are still in the early steps of interpreting ability, so that the observation on the problems and constraints can be easily observed. Second, the material and the instrument can be designed and prepared to suit the kind of data needed for the analysis.

Although there are two kinds of interpreting modes, which are consecutive and simultaneous, the research only discusses one type of simultaneous interpreting called sight translation in which the SL is written and the TL is spoken. This type of simultaneous interpreting is chosen because in terms of level of difficulties, sight translation is the easier kind simultaneous interpreting (Ginori and Scimone, 38).

## 2. INTERPRETING, SIGHT TRANSLATION, AND ITS CONSTRAINTS

In general, there are two kinds of interpreting modes. Consecutive interpreting mode is an interpreting activity which is done after a speaker finishes the whole or a part of his/her speech (Ginori&Scimone 17). This procedure is done repeatedly, so there is a kind of turn taking between the speaker and the interpreter. This mode of interpreting is usually done when all the listeners speak the same TL.

The other mode is simultaneous interpreting. In this mode, the interpreter delivers the SL message into the TL directly while the SL message proceeds (Nolan 3). In other words, there is no pause between the delivery of the SL message and the TL.

Sight translation is kind of simultaneous interpreting in which the SL form is a written text while the TL is spoken. It is categorized as a simultaneous one because the oral translation is given while the interpreter reads the text of the SL. There is no pause or interval between reading the SL text (by heart) and reproducing the message in the TL orally and simultaneously (Ginori and Scimone 18). Although the delivery is simultaneous, correction and revision of TL message can still be done (Pochhacker 19).

Simultaneous reproduction of the SL message into the TL may lead to inaccuracy of message reproduction. This inaccuracy is caused by some translation problems. The most common problems are the different nature of the SL and TL, such as the structure, the range of vocabulary, as well as the cultural background (Bassnett32). In the context of simultaneous interpreting, the possibility of the occurrence of the problems is very high because the interpreter barely has time to make sure that they have chosen the most accurate expressions or the most appropriate structure. In other word, interpreters have to deal with another issue in sight translation called time constraint which is confronted with the accuracy of message transfer.

According to Ginori and Scimone, the constraints in interpreting is related with time consideration opposed to accuracy of performance as described in the following table.

### Time consideration and accuracy of performance

|  | Time consideration | Accuracy of performance |
|---|---|---|
| Written translation | 1 | 5 |
| Consecutive (whole speech) interpreting | 2 | 4 |
| Sentence-by-sentence interpreting | 3 | 3 |

| Sight Translation | 4 | 2 |
| Simultaneous interpreting | 5 | 1 |

(quoted fromGinori&Scimone 38)

In the table, bigger numbers indicate more constraints and more accuracy. So, in the case of simultaneous interpreting, the risk of delivering inaccurate message is very high due to time constraints. Pochhacker (52) calls it performance constraints.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research describes and discusses the constraints encountered by interpreters when doing sight translation of English SL written texts into an Indonesian oral TL texts. The data of this research were obtained from the students' performance in Interpreting class at the English Department of Sanata Dharma University.

Since this research has been focused on the constraints, the data collected must represent or contain all information required to describe as well as to discuss the constraints. For this requirement, purposive sampling (Sutopo 56) was used in this research. The respondents for this research were selected purposively based on their knowledge in performing sight translation. For this purpose, the students taking Interpreting class at the English Letters Department of Sanata Dharma University were involved in this research as respondents. Technically, the data were obtained by recording the students' performance in conducting sight translation. The records were later transcribed into written forms to facilitate the analysis of the constraints.

### a. Constraints Encountered by the Students of Interpreting Class in Doing Sight Translation

This part first describes the students' performance of sight translation, and then, discusses the constraints based on the students' performances. Two SL texts and two oral translation of each SL text were selected because they show the constraints that can be identified from the students' sight translation.

**SL Text 1:**

**Urgently Required**

Executive Chef for 5 star Chinese Restaurant

Qualifications:

· Minimum 15 year experience
· Honest and hard working
· Good and positive attitude
· An attractive salary and benefit packages will be negotiated with the successful candidates.

Please send your CV and recent photograph to the following address by mail or email.

The first SL text is about a job vacancy advertisement. It contains vocabulary related to jobs, qualifications, job application. Structurally, the text contains phrases and sentences.

**TL Text 1:**

**Student 1**

*(Ehm) dibutuhkansegeraeksekutifchefuntuk hotel untuk (ee..)restoranCinabintang lima denganpersyaratan (ee..) (ehm) pengalaman minimal*

*lima belastahun, jujur, bekerjaker..danbekerjakeras (ee..) baiksecara*personality*dan (ee..) ati..*attitude *yang positifdan (ee..) gaji yang menarikserta (ee..) keuntungan yang akandidapatjikabisadinego.. negosiasi (ee..) dimohonuntukmengirimkan CV dan (ee..) foto (ee..) denganberalamatkan mail atau email yang tertera.*

When performing sight translation on TL 1 text, this particular student makes several pauses. The pauses are marked by the vocal indication 'ehm', and 'ee....'. The first vocal indication is made at the beginning of the interpretation. This pause allows the student to make a quick scanning to guess what the text is about. The second pause occurs after she makes a wrong assumption about the expression related to *bintanglima* 'five star'. At first she said *hotel*'hotel', but then, she correct it into *restoran*'restaurant'. The second pause occurs when she comes to the part of the advertisement which talks about the qualifications. In this part, she pauses when she has to interpret 'good and positive attitude'. She, then, interprets it into *baiksecara personality* 'good personality' and *attitude yang positif* 'positive attitude'. The next pause takes place when she interprets 'An attractive salary and benefit packages will be negotiated with the successful candidates'. The pause particularly happens when she has to interpret 'benefit packages', which later she describes it as *keuntungan yang akandidapat*. However, the later part of the sentence '...will be negotiated with the successful candidates' is not interpreted. The next pause occurs when she interprets 'recent photograph'. In her interpretation she finally omits the word 'recent'.

From the description above, it can be concluded that there is a tendency for this student to make pauses to comprehend the context of sentence or the phrases. It can be seen from the pauses she made at the beginning of each part of the advertisement. Another tendency is pauses at certain words, such as '...will be negotiated with the successful candidates' and 'recent photograph'. This shows that there is a problem of fluency either in finding the right expressions or the right TL structure. This can be seen also from the use of borrowed expressions 'personality' and 'attitude'. Finally, this student's decision to skip interpreting some parts of the text indicates that there is a problem with finding the right expressions in the TL due to the problem of comprehension of the SL considering that the TL is generally the students' first or second language.

### Student 2

*DibutuhkansegerakokieksekutifuntukrestoranCinabintanglima. Kualifikasi (short pause) minimal limabelastahunpengalaman, jujurdanpekerjakeras, baikdanpositifdalam (long pause) berkelakuanbaik. Gajimenarikdan (long pause) beberapatambahanakandinegosiasikanuntukkandidat yang sukses. Kirimkan CV danfototerbaruAndakealamat email ataualamatsuratberikut.*

Unlike the previous one, this student immediately starts her interpretation right after the SL text is given. There are only three significant pauses in her interpretation. The first pause is short. It happens when she begins with the interpretation of the qualifications. The first long pause takes place when she interprets the phrase 'good and positive attitude'. She first said '*baikdanpositifdalam'*, but then she made a long pause. Later she decided to replace it with'*berkelakuanbaik'.*The second long pause occurs when she interprets '....benefit packages will be negotiated with the successful candidates'. She then interprets into *beberapatambahanakandinegosiasikanuntukkandidat yang sukses*. The word 'benefit' is interpreted into *tambahan* 'addition' which suggests a more general sense. Meanwhile, the phrase 'the successful candidates' is interpreted literally into *kandidat yang sukses*.

From this performance, it can be concluded that this student's comprehension of the SL is relatively good although she still lacks some vocabulary items. Occasionally, her interpretation sounds literal, but in general the whole message can substantially be delivered into the TL.

The second text to be interpreted deals with instructions found in a package of a product, in this case printer cartridge.

**SL Text 2:**

**Genuine Canon**

- Do not open the cartridge until you are ready to use it. After opening, gently remove the protective tape, and then promptly install the cartridge in the printer.
- Do not touch the electrical contacts of the cartridge.
- To obtain the best print quality, store the box with the bottom facing down.
- Use up all ink within 6 months after opening to obtain the best print quality.
- Store in a location out of the reach of children.

This text contains steps of installing a new cartridge into a printer. Structurally, this text contains imperative sentences. There is vocabulary related to terminology used in operating computers and to refer to computer devices.

**TL Text 2:**

**Student 3**

*(Ehm) (long pause) Genuine Canon. Janganmembukaketridsampai (short pause) sampaisiapuntukdigunakan. Setelahdibuka (short pause) (ee..)lepaskanperlahan (ee..) tape pengamannyalalupasanglahketrid di printer. (short pause)Jangan(almost overlap) dilarangmemegang(long pause) (ee..)komponen-komponenelektrik yang terdapat di ketrid. Untukmendapatkanhasil print yang terbaik, simpanlahdengankotak (short pause) simpanlahsimpanlahkotakdenganbagianbawahmenghadapkebawah. Gunakansemuatintaatauhabiskansemuatintadalamjangkawaktuenambulansetelahdibuka, untukmendapatkankualitas print yang terbaik. Letakkanlah di lokasi yang tidakbisa di...dijangkauolehanak-anak.*

Although the interpretation of the second SL text by this student is substantially complete, this student still makes some pauses during the delivery. A long pause takes place at the beginning of the interpretation. Similar to the interpretation of SL Text 1 by Student 1, the long pause here also indicates that this student tries to understand the context and comprehend the message. In the next parts he makes some short pauses and/or some vocal indication 'ee…'. The first short pause is when he comes to the word 'gently remove', which later he translates into *lepaskanperlahan*. Before interpreting the second instruction, he also pauses, then translates the word 'don't' into*jangan*.Later he quickly revises the expression into *dilarang*. There is another long pause and vocal indication 'ee…' when he has to interpret the phrase 'the electrical contacts of the cartridge'. After the long pause, he finally interprets it into *komponen-komponenelektrik yang terdapat di ketrid.* Another short pause occurs when he interprets 'store the box with the bottom facing down'. At first he says

'*simpanlahdengankotak*"store in a box', but then, after making a short pause, he revises it into *simpanlahkotakdenganbagianbawahmenghadapkebawah,* which is more accurate.

From the interpretation above, it can be concluded that this student can comprehend the SL text well and mostly succeeds in delivering the message into the TL. The constraint he encounters is mainly concerned with finding the right expressions within the time restriction. It can be seen from the number of pauses and vocal indication that makes his performance less fluent.

### Student 4

*Janganmembukakartrid (short pause)sampaiAnda (short pause)siapuntukmembukanya. Setelahmembukanya, pindahkan (long pause) lalu (short pause) install kartridkedalam printer. Janganmenyentuh..langsung (short pause)sambunganlistrik yang ada di kartrid. Untkhasil print terbaik, gunakan (long pause) gunakansemuatinta (short pause) enambulansetelahdibuka. Letakkanpadatempatjauhdarijangkauananakkecil.*

There are two long pauses occurring in this interpretation. The first long pause happens when this student interprets the second part of the first instruction 'After opening, gently remove the protective tape, and then promptly install the cartridge in the printer'. It seems that she has a problem in finding the right expression for '….gently remove the protective tape, and then promptly….' because she finally skips that part and directly goes on with the interpretation of the next part install *kartridkedalam printer* 'install the cartridge in the printer'. The second long pause takes place when interpreting 'Use up all ink within 6 months after opening to obtain the best print quality'. After translating the phrase 'use up' into *gunakan*, she paused, then continues her interpretation of that part, but skips the last part 'to obtain the best print quality'.

The short pauses occurs five times. The first indicates doubts while the second oneis when she interprets '…until you are ready to…', '…promptly…', and 'within' in '…within 6 months after opening…'. Interpreting '…until you are ready to use it' into *sampaiAndasiapuntukmembukanya*indicates literal translation. In the TL, such an expression is not considered idiomatic. In the TL, the sentence 'Do not open the cartridge until you are ready to use it' is more idiomatically translated into *gunakan*cartridge*segerasetelahdibuka*. The rest of the short pauses alsoindicate doubts. Some of the doubts then result in the omission in the interpretation, such as the omission of the translation of 'within'. This omission affects the accuracy of message transfer because the sense of period of time is missing in the interpretation.

From the facts found in the interpretation above, it can be concluded that this student makes several pauses because she has a problem in finding the right expressions in the TL although the expressions she fails to deliver are words people commonly use in daily conversations. When she fails to find the right expressions, she decides not to interpret those parts and proceeds with the next part in order to fulfill the sense of simultaneous interpreting.

## 4. CONCLUSION

From the description of the students' performance in conducting sight translation and the discussion above, it can be concluded that, first, most of the constraints in performing sight translation are caused by the students' inability to anticipate the vocabulary or

expressions that may appear in a particular text and be ready with the equivalent expressions in the TL although they are able to comprehend the message. The second is related to student immediate comprehension of the SL structure. This can be seen in their interpretations that tend to be literal. Since the target language is generally the students' first or second language, those students do not have a substantial problem with the fluency in delivering the message in the TL. However, problems of fluency when delivering the message in the TL may still occur due to the students' poor mastery of the source language.

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