

## **Tracking The Mastery of Social Interpreters' Knowledge of Religious Activities In Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research was concerned with social consecutive interpreting; its objective was to analyze and find out the mastery in knowledge of two interpreters who played their role in two different religious activities. The first religious activities led by an American Evangelist, namely John Hartman; and the other activities led by the Israeli Evangelist, namely Ps. Benny Hinn. Both the Interpreters observed in this research are Indonesian and work as an Evangelist. The data in this research were collected by using questionnaire and conducting interviews and processed by using Likert scale calculation and analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method, based on the theory of interpreting competency in order to find out their mastery in knowledge to determine their competency in interpreting. The questionnaire then given to three raters who are Indonesian and really experienced in doing Interpreting in religious setting. The result of this research are: (i) both Interpreters mastered in both source and target language (namely English and Indonesia), as well as in both cultures; (ii) although they do not work as an Interpreter, both of them are succeed in transferring the message and making the audiences understand about the preaching.

**Keywords:** *consecutive, interpreting, religious setting*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Interpreting activities have been continuously developing, along with the globalization era and the transparency of intercommunication boundaries between regions and between countries which make interpreters the key mediators of the global communication. Along with the establishment of social global communication between countries, the presence and the role of interpreters are highly contributing to the whole aspects of human lives (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009: 18). One of them is in the religious sector.

Interpretation in religious activities (in religious settings) is called, social interpretation. Every person who is in charge to interpret good

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religious speech or sermons, as well as the whole series of the activities is called a Social Interpreter because his interpreting activity is concerned with public service sector in facilitating the communication between functionaries and the people such as in the police stations, immigration offices, social welfare centers, medical and mental health centers, schools, worship houses, place of religious services, and the like (Wadensjo, 2000:33; Pochhacker, 2001; Gile 2000).

Talking about religious matters is very sensitive because every religion has its different doctrine and belief. Therefore, an interpreter should be competent in translating speeches or sermons in order to be able to do his job properly. With a reliable competence, an interpreter is able to interpret what an Evangelist conveys in his message correctly and accurately to his congregation. If he misinterprets the meaning of the sermon from the source language (henceforth, **SL**), the whole members of the congregation will go astray

An interpreter should always sharpen and increase his competency in order to carry out his job and to take his responsibility well. Without interpreting competency, he will surely fail to shift a message smoothly, correctly, and accurately, and he can be called, an unprofessional interpreter.

One of the components in establishing an interpreter's competency is "knowledge." The first thing what an interpreter should do is that he has to be provided with good knowledge of language, supported by the knowledge of the speaker's cultural language (Source Language or **SL** or Target Language or **TL**, henceforth, **TL**). Besides that, having the knowledge of language and culture is not enough, an interpreter has to master the theme and the topic of the interpreted language. In this case, he needs to be equipped with the knowledge about the subject he wants to interpret. An example can be found in this research. The two interpreters as the subjects of the research have to master the whole theory concerning Christian religion and the knowledge of the Scriptures properly.

An interpreter's mastery of knowledge can be influenced by his background. His mastery of knowledge of **TL**, i.e., English, and the culture of the two language, **SL** and **TL**, he, of course, has an appropriate background of good knowledge; for example, they have the same knowledge of linguistics or English education. However, besides this knowledge, they also have to have various experiences and trainings in interpreting. For example, both interpreters in this research did not have any knowledge of linguistics or English education.

Based on the result of the observation on the two interpreters, it was found that the backgrounds of the First Interpreter (henceforth, **FI**) and the Second Interpreter (henceforth, **SI**) are explained in the following Table:

Table 1. Backgrounds of FI and SI

No	Aspects	FI	SI
1	Education	-	S3 in Business Administration
2.	Experiiece in Interpreting Sermons	More than 20 years	12 years
3.	Resiency duration in the country of using English as the main language	-	26 years
4.	Experience in Traning	Biblical Training	SOM (School of Ministry)
5.	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	-	IELTS Score of 6,5 (Competent User)
6.	Other Experiences	Translating various English Texts (books, magazines, songs, literary works)  Active in and has always become champion in speech competitions since childhood	-

The data in the Table above show that FI and SI do not learn and deepen Linguistics and theology through formal education (university level). The only training participated by both of them is concerned with religion (Scriptures), Besides that, either FI or SI never take part in training about interpreting to support their capability of interpreting sermons.

## METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative approach. A qualitative research is based on casual condition or a natural setting, Moreover, in this research, the writer herself became the key instrument and gathered the data by conducting documentary study, observation, and/or intrerview with participants (Creswell, 2017: 248). Primary data were referred to various components of knowledge organized into statements in a questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to three raters to assess the mastery of knowledge of each interpreter who became the subjects in this research. The raters who assessed the interpreters' level of competency consisted of two persons, selected according to certain criteria; one of them was the writer herself (in this case, she played her

role as the researcher). The criteria of selecting the raters in this research was based on i) *sarjana* or undergraduate degree, ii) having experience as consecutive interpreter at least five years, and iii) the current profession (either as an academican in translating & interpreting or interpreter).

Primary data in this dissertation were obtained through video recording containing interpreting activities done by each of the interpreters (who played their role in religious affairs, led by Ev. John Hartman and Ps. Benny Hinn). Three video recorders of the interpreters were observed to evaluate the mastery of knowledge owned by both interpreters. The three video recorder consisted of one interpreting video recorder done by Ev. Evelyn nadeak (FI) in the spiritual refreshment program led by Ev. John Hartman, and the other two interpreting video recorders done by Ps. Agus Gunawan (SI) in the religious activity, Spiritual Awakening Church Service (henceforth, **SACS**) led by Ps. Benny Hinn. The interpreting video recorders were uploaded through youtube website. Meanwhile, the data related to the background of the two interpreters that became the research subjects were obtained through the process of interviews with the interpreters respectively. In this case, the whole information given by them was transferred to and noted down by the writer into a note book containing an interviewing record.

Secondary data in this research included the parameter of consecutive interpreting competency formulated by NAATI and the parameter of interpreting competency proposed by Pochhacker. Besides the interpreting competency parameter, the secondary data in this research also included the result of the writer's interview with two raters who observed and assessed the competency of each of the interpreters. The result of the interviews was then exposed in the form of interviewing notes.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Knowledge is one of the important aspects which determines whether an interpreter is competent or not. Assessing the mastery of knowledge of the FI and the SI in this research can be observed from various components explained in the following Table:

**Table 2. Assessment of the Knowledge Components of FI and SI Knowledge**

No	Statements	ST B		TB		C		B		SB		SCORE		PERCENTAGE	
		FI	SI	FI	SI	FI	SI	FI	SI	FI	SI	FI	SI		
1	Understanding about theoretical religion according to the transferred theme of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	15	14	100%	93%

	activity														
2	Mastery of spoken language in FI and SI	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	87	87
												3	3	%	%
3	Interpreter's mastery of terminology (special terms) in Christianity in FI and SI	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	1	1	10	87
												5	3	0%	%
4	Mastery of grammatical structure of FI and SI by Interpreters	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	93	87
												4	3	%	%
5	Interpreters' mastery of SL and TL speakers' culture	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	1	1	10	87
												3	3	0%	%
6	Mastery of oral consecutive interpreting method and technique	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	87	87
												3	3	%	%
7	Mastery of vocabulary in SL and TL	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	1	80	80
												2	2	%	%
		0	0	0	1	0	5	8	1	1	1	9	9	92	87
												3	4	%	%

Based on the presented data in the Table above, we can see that mastery of knowledge of both interpreters includes various components such as a) understanding religious theories based on the types and themes of activities which are interpreted, b) mastery of spoken language in English and Indonesian, c) mastery of terminology in Christianity in SL and TL, d) mastery of grammatical structure in English (SL) and Indonesian (TL), e) mastery of the culture of English speakers and the culture of the Indonesian speakers, f) mastery of using interpreting method and technique, and g) mastery of English and Indonesian vocabularies.

Based on the observation, of the seven components of knowledge, the perfect assessment obtained by FI is on the mastery of terminology in Christianity, either in SL or in TL; understanding the culture of SL and TL speakers and interpreters' understanding about religious theories according to the themes of activities being interpreted. It is perfect because the FI gets the total assessment of 15 and the percentage of assessment of 100% for the three components of knowledge. On the other hand, the assessment obtained by the SI is different. In this case, there is no perfect assessment obtained by the SI for the whole components of knowledge. Nevertheless, assessment given to the SI always indicates that SI has the adequate mastery of knowledge of linguistics, culture, and theme to do his job as an interpreter.

Concerning this case, when we look into the data explained in Table 4.1.1, the highest score obtained by SI is on the understanding religious

theories according to the theme of activities being interpreted (i.e., the total score of 114 and the percentage of assessment of 93%). The assessment indicates that SI's understanding about various religious theories is related to the theme of SACS he has interpreted which is included in the excellent category.

Meanwhile, the FI's and SI's mastery of knowledge which gets the lowest score is on the component of vocabulary mastery in English and Indonesian (i.e., the assessment percentage of 80%), even though the assessment acquisition of this component is the lowest one, it is still in "good" category. It indicates that the vocabulary related to religious activities interpreted by each of the interpreters in English and Indonesian is more than adequate to enable them to seek the right synonyms.

As a whole, the two interpreters' mastery of knowledge can be categorized as "excellent" (with the percentage of the whole assessment of knowledge owned by FI is 92% and SI is 87%). From the assessment of the seven components of knowledge given by the raters, it can be concluded that both FI and SI have adequate capital of knowledge to interpret the sermons and the series of SACS activities from English to Indonesian.

### **Discussion**

A person's knowledge (including interpreters) is influenced by some factors such as level of education, profession, age, interest, experience, environment, and source of information (Mubarak, 2011: 55) Concerning this case, it is found in this research that the mastery level of knowledge of the interpreters whose job is to interpret sermons led by Ev. John Hartman and the interpreter who plays the role in the spiritual awakening activity led by Ps. Benny Hinn is in a high category. It indicates that each of them has the good mastery of knowledge. It is proved that both of them get high score for each component of knowledge.

Mastery of knowledge owned by both interpreters is referred to linguistic knowledge, mastery of SL and TL speakers' culture, and mastery of the subjects which will be interpreted. By good mastery of these three components of knowledge, both interpreters are able to convey the same message as it is conveyed by the speakers through the source utterances. In this case, we can see that the two interpreters can find accurate synonyms in Indonesian easily. They can also adjust to the culture of the English and Indonesian speakers.

Besides the two interpreters' mastery of linguistics and culture, they also master the interpreted topics. Understanding and mastery of the three components of knowledge are proved by the quality of the source of speech being interpreted. By understanding the grammatical structure of the two languages and having adequate vocabulary, understanding the culture of both languages, and mastering Christian religious doctrines, including various special terminologies related to the topics being interpreted are very helpful for the interpreters to yield accurate targeting speech. This is in accordance with some researches conducted

by Maroney (2019) and Lei Dai (2021) which state that mastering two languages and their culture translated or interpreted and mastering texts which will be translated will have positive contribution to a translator's capacity (i.e., interpreters) in producing accurate and acceptable translation.

Mastery of knowledge owned by an interpreter will, of course, be influenced by his background. When we track the background of the two interpreters above, we will be faced by the questions: why can they interpret all of the source utterances into Indonesian fluently while their educational background is not linguistics? How can they get the knowledge of linguistics (especially English) and English and Indonesian culture while both of them do not specifically learn and deepen linguistics? In order to answer these questions, we need to look into their background.

As it has been explained in the background of the report of this dissertation that both of the FI and SI do not have any linguistic background in English and Indonesian. The interpreter who interprets the sermons led by Ev. John Hartman does not continue his study in the higher education (university) while the interpreter whose job is interpreting the activities in SACS led by Ps. Benny Hinn has his educational background in economics. Viewed from their educational background, people will, of course, think that the interpreters do not have any good linguistic knowledge of translating. In reality, the result of the evaluation done toward the mastery of knowledge of the two interpreters indicates that both of them (FI and SI) have the mastery level of linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and complete mastery of interpreting which are in the excellent category (the percentage of FI's mastery of knowledge is 92% and the percentage of SI's mastery of knowledge is 87%).

Educational background is the most important factor which influences a person's mastery of knowledge. It is expected that higher education will help him increase his knowledge (Notoatmojo, 2014). Referring to this concept, it is very difficult for an interpreter to interpret the sermons led by Ev. John Haretman, conveyed in English to Indonesian, considering that the interpreter's educational background does not fulfill the qualification standard for being an interpreter.

On the contrary, however, there is a concept which states that a person with low level of education does not necessarily have low level of knowledge, and increasing one's knowledge does not always have to follow formal education; it can be reached with informal education (Mubarak, 2011; Notoatmojo, 2014). Therefore, based on this concept, it is not impossible for a person who has different educational background to do his job as an interpreter (as what occurs in the two interpreters who are the subjects of this dissertation). However, even though they have different educational background, they never succumb to devote their career to serve God. This call for religious service which actually cause them to be able to do their job as interpreters.

Mastery of linguistic knowledge and culture (English) is obtained by the two interpreters from their experience and various trainings. FI's experience in translating various English texts and interpreting sermons for tens of years has positive contribution to the development of his linguistic science and knowledge. Besides that, his knowledge of SL and TL and the culture of the two languages (cultural knowledge) are also obtained from his experience in religious services in many countries. He also has a lot of experience in spreading the word of God, along with the other foreign speakers. By this experience, he gets a lot of information about foreign cultures so that he is able to identify certain cultural references in SL and to express them accurately in TL. It can be seen that FI get high assessment score in the component of cultural knowledge.

The same is also true to SI, His profound experience in knowledge and as a servant of God (Evangelist) in a foreign country (Australia) for a long time has also great influence on his knowledge (not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural one). This also influences his test score in English proficiency. He gets IELTS score of 6.5 (with the category of a competent user). Concerning this case, based on the observation and the raters' assessment, he is also categorized as a very competent interpreter.

In other words, mastery of knowledge (either linguistics or cultural understanding) owned by the two interpreters becomes increasing and developing because it is influenced by various external factors. Concerning this case, the similar result is also found in the research conducted by Syahputra (2017) which states that various external factors can influence an interpreter's mastery of knowledge which is then contributed to the interpreting quality of tour guides.

Moreover, the result of this research is in accordance with the concept of competency proposed by NAATI which points out that intercultural competency which includes cultural knowledge owned by interpreters can be obtained through direct experience and/or cultural study.

Besides linguistic knowledge and understanding the culture of bilingual speakers, other mastery of knowledge which should be owned by an interpreter is related to the field or topics which are going to be interpreted. Based on this reality, mastery of the field being interpreted is also obtained by the two interpreters through training. In this case, both FI and SI participate in training which is beneficial to develop their Christian religious knowledge (training about the Scriptures or biblical training done by FI and the school of ministry done by SI). These two types of training are closely related to deepening the Scripture and developing the capacity to serve God.

In addition, an interpreter's background (commencing from education, experience to various types of training) highly contributes to his development of science and knowledge about the two languages (English and Indonesian), to the increase in his knowledge of Christian

religious doctrines, and to the positive influence on his accurate interpreting. The same case is also found in the research conducted by Khrisna (2008) and Bhaktipertiwi (2018). Even though there is a little bit difference between the study done by Khrisna and the study done by Bhaktipertiwi, viewed from the location of the interpreting activity, they yield the same concept which says that an interpreter's background will always have the effect on the interpreter's mastery of knowledge.

The result of the researches of Khrisna, Bhaktipertiwi, and this dissertation is also in accordance with the concept proposed by Gile (2000), Pochhacker (2004), and Nababan (2004) which point out that technical factors and non-technical factors (which come from the self or from the interpreter himself) also influence an interpreter's capacity to yield qualified interpretation.

### CONCLUSION

Even though the background is not English, the interpreter who is active in the religious activities led by Ev. John Hartman and the interpreter who is active in the religious activities led by Ps. Benny Hinn, have the mastery of knowledge and the capacity to use English very well. The mastery of knowledge (either it is related to linguistics, culture, or Christian doctrines) owned by the two interpreters is obtained through their experience in translating various English texts, their experience in interpreting sermons for more than ten years, and their profession as interpreters and Evangelists have caused them to seriously deepen their knowledge of the Scriptures and everything which is concerned with Christian doctrines.

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