

# Errors And Problems Faced by The Students in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze the errors and problems faced by the students in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting. This study is conducted in an interpreting class of six semester English Letters students of IAIN Surakarta. This study was conducted to know the students' types of errors and problems in practicing consecutive interpreting. This is a descriptive-qualitative research. It presents the data with a content analysis method. This research uses documentation, error validation, and interviews to answer the research questions. The data were gained by collecting the students' performance videos in practicing consecutive interpreting and establishing interviews to get additional information. The results showed that among 159 errors, which were occurred during the students' performances, the errors can be classified into 8 types. They are errors in non-conservation of paralinguistic features, omission, distortion, inadequate language proficiency, literal translation, addition, register conservation, protocol, procedure and ethics. The non-conservation paralinguistic features are the most frequent error with 57 occurrences (35.8%) and the least common error found is protocol, procedure and ethics with 2 occurrences (1.3%). Those errors were caused by the students' problems. The results show that there are 8 types of problems faced by the students, including nervousity, English proficiency, lack of practice, interpretation partner, classmates, time pressure, confidence and public speaking skills. Overall, the students need more practice and knowledge, especially in English proficiency and need guidance in solving their problems to improve their interpretation skills.

**Keywords:** Errors; Problems; English to Indonesian; Consecutive Interpreting

## 1. Introduction

Interpreting and translation is a bridge for two or more people to communicate or transfer meaning to each other even if they do not know each other's languages and have different language backgrounds, rather than transferring linguistic meaning word for word (Massey, 2007). Interpreting is needed as a device to connect one language to another language, one person to another person, and one culture to another culture.

While, high linguistic and sociocultural competencies are important in interpreting, both general and field-specific. Then, interpreters also need terrific subject knowledge to comprehend the ST, interpersonal skills to intimately cooperate with people, presentation skills to deliver qualified information with a suitable voice, and professional skills to work honorably (Angelelli 2006 in Cerezo 2015). Therefore, interpreting skills have become one of the hot issues that received wide attention.

Being an interpreter is challenging and stressful. Interpreters cannot be good active bilingual speakers of both languages in the level of professional except they take additional study and training. Therefore, interpreters should undertake several practices and training to comprehend the professional level skill. For amateur-level such as students, one of the interpreting classes that can be taken is consecutive interpreting classes, which have lower skills than professional interpreters should take. For amateur interpreters, memorizing is hard to do, especially for people who have short-term memory.

One of the universities providing the interpreting course is IAIN Surakarta, especially in the program of English Letters Department. In this interpreting practice, the students should interpret the descriptive text about people from their friends from English to Indonesian in the first step and then jump to the next step which is interpreting from a native

speaker or tourist native speaker they met. Moreover, in the third and fourth practice, they should interpret the news videos and role-play about two ways of interpreting.

This research examines the students' consecutive interpreting performances in the sixth semester of the English Letters Department in the IAIN Surakarta. The researcher believes that the students still have so many errors and problems in practicing consecutive interpreting because the students are amateur interpreters and lack experience in practicing consecutive interpreting.

A study by Ribas (2012) showed that the differences between the two levels of interpreters faced different problems. The professional or advanced level has fewer problems than the amateur does. The subjects faced problems in practicing consecutive interpreting such as a lack of understanding of source speech, practice, vocabulary, decoding errors, note-taking errors, and concentration. Another study by Pratiwi (2016) showed that interpreting students also have some errors when practicing interpreting such as grammatical errors, addition, omission, distortion, and so on.

This research is expected to help the lecturer understand what errors and problems are faced by the students in practicing consecutive interpreting, especially in the sixth-semester students of the English Letters Department in IAIN Surakarta. Lecturers may recognize the errors and find solutions to overcome the errors. Hence, the researcher will conduct an analysis of "Errors and Problems Faced by the Students in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting."

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of Interpretation

There are many definitions of interpreting according to experts. According to Anderson (1978: 218) in al-Zahran (2007:15) interpretation is reformulating and retransmitting a message orally from one language to another language. This definition is followed by Seleskovitch's (1978: 87) in al-Zahran (2007:15) definition that emphasizes the oral method, in which interpretation is the verbal expression of things and any ideas with non-deliberate creation of linguistic equivalents

In short, interpreting is conveying a message or an idea from one language to another language, as a bridge of language barriers. Interpreter helps one another understand the gap not only in language but also gap of culture. Therefore, the purposes of the speakers can be conveyed well.

### 2.2 Types of Errors in Interpreting

There are main types of errors in consecutive interpreting (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1996; Barik, 1971; Hairuo, 2015; Chinh, 2010; and Altman, 1994 in Pratiwi, 2016).

#### a. Literal translation

Literal translation errors happen when the students or the interpreters only render the word-for-word substitution instead of preserving the ideas.

#### b. Inadequate language proficiency

Lack of language proficiency makes the interpreters understand the source language and convert the ideas into a full meaning and faithful message at the required speed of speech into the TL without any hesitating and communication interruption. Moreover, the interpreters have the skill to guess the language patterns correctly (sentences and expressions).

Two main categories of errors in language proficiency are described as follows:

##### 1) Grammatical Errors

The verb tense of the covenant is able to change the intelligence and distress the integrity of the speaker. Destructing numbers can alter meaning extremely.

##### 2) Lexical errors

The weak or insufficient access to the variation of synonyms words and other intralingua skills leads the interpreters to make lexical errors. Interpreters with a lack of language proficiency would paraphrase, define, invent, omit, guess, and very often cause a web of confusion.

#### c. Register Conservation

The register is a variety of languages, as determined by the degree of formality and choice of vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax, according to the communicative purpose, and social status of the user, e.g. the level of formality of speech from courtroom, classroom, to a social event etc.

#### d. Distortion

Either the overall or part of the meaning is lost when a message is distorted. This is because the interpreters do not understand the importance of preserving the entire message. There are three possible reasons for them:

- 1) Deficient language skills
- 2) Memory
- 3) Interpretation skills

This often happens when there are very short messages (fewer than fifteen words). On the other hand, this happens if it has technical linguistic, emotional intensity, hedges, particles, false starts, unfinished sentences, and incomprehensible language.

#### e. Omissions

Omissions refer to items in the original version that are left out of the translation. According to Barik (1971: 200), the omission is divided into four types:

- 1) Skipping omission: The omission of a short phrase or word that seems to be skipped out by the interpreters but does not change the structure. This omission causes a little loss in meaning.
- 2) Comprehension omission: The type of omission that occurs when the interpreters cannot comprehend part of the text. This omission causes a sure loss in meaning.
- 3) Delay omission: The subcategory of comprehension omission occurs when the interpreter produces his or her version of a segment of the text in the target language.
- 4) Compounding omission: The compounding omission is in the three omissions above although disjointed speech may have resulted. Compounding omission happens when the interpreter compounds two sentences by omitting some phrases.

#### f. Additions

Additions refer to adding information in the target language. When interpreters cannot memorize the source text well, the interpreters rather “invent” information than clarify the genuine message.

Adding some information when delivering the message to the clients. There are four types of additions:

- 1) Qualifier addition: Qualifier addition happens when an adjective or adverb is added by the interpreters in the target language but does not exist in the source language.
- 2) Elaboration addition: Elaboration addition is when the interpreters elaborate and provide some non-related information.
- 3) Relationship addition: Relationship addition is when the interpreter adds a connective or conjunction that is not originally in the source language and it can provide a new meaning or relationship.
- 4) Closure addition: Closure addition happens when the addition is accompanied by rephrasing, omission or misinterpretation on the part of the target text and which provides closure to a sentence component, but does not add anything significant to the sentence.

#### g. Protocol, Procedure and Ethics

This error occurs when the interpreters are inaccurate or unfaithful to the message moreover when the message includes blasphemies. This is necessary to correct the errors especially when interpretation becomes part of a formal record.

For example: talking with witnesses while waiting for the trial to start may give the interpreter added information that may change interpretations or cause errors.

Ethics, procedures, protocol, and confidentiality are all very important.

#### h. Non-Conservation of Paralinguistic Features

Repetition of words or phrases, incomplete sentences, and filler.

##### 1) Filler

It is when the interpreter makes “*euuu*”, “*uh*”, and “*umm*” sounds which can lead to incomplete interpretation or it may also make the clients difficult to grasp its meaning (Gonzalez *et al.* 1996 in Pratiwi, 2016). In this case, instead of remaining silent, they make fillers in their speech. Sometimes the sound “*euu*” disturbs the speaker/client.

##### 2) Incomplete sentence

According to Chinh (2010), incomplete sentences happen when the interpreters feel the time pressure. Since incomplete sentence leads to incorrect meaning, incomplete sentences can become one of the serious errors. It will cause misunderstanding to the audience. An incomplete sentence makes a corrupt interpretation outcome. This is called an unfinished interpretation.

##### 3) Repeated words or phrases

Since the time limitation makes the students carry out the students’ ideas, it leads them to speak in incomplete sentences. This incomplete sentence is also caused by repeated words. Many repeated words produced by the interpreters make damaging the meaning. A little repetition only disturbs speech fluency (Yin, 2005 in Pratiwi, 2016) but many repeated words make speech sounds chaotic, jumbled, and disjointed products of interpretation.

### 2.3 Types of Problems in Interpreting

According to Chinh (2010), there are seven types of problems in interpreting, namely time pressure, lack of practice, nervousness, classmates, speaking skills, poor health, and tape recorder quality. Also, Pratiwi (2016) categorizes the problems into seven different reasons: 1) nervousness; 2) lack of language proficiency; 3) time pressure; 4) lack of practice; 5) lack of vocabulary; 6) concentration; and 7) environment. Some of them are connected to each other. For example, when the interpreters lack practice, it causes them nervousness which directly or indirectly lose students’ self-assurance and ruins the quality of the interpretation.

In addition, the other research conducted by Ribas (2012) categorizes the interpreting problems into four segments:

- a. Listening and understanding problems may be caused by: a lack of understanding of the source speech, numbers, lack of common sense, speed of delivery of the source speech, unfamiliarity with the topic, sound problems, length of the source speech, information density, lack of practice and lack of attention/concentration.
- b. Note-taking problem includes lack of understanding of the source speech, speed of delivery of the source speech, information density, lack of practice, and numbers.
- c. Decoding notes problem includes: unable to understand their own notes, lack of restitution speed, lack of connectors, unclear notes, and memory problem.
- d. Expressing and reformulating problem has branches: lack of understanding of the source speech, feeling nervous, lack of confidence, unclear notes, overuse of connectors, and problems expressing themselves.

### 3. Research Methodology

Since the objective of this study is to describe the errors and problems in practicing consecutive interpreting, so this research is descriptive-qualitative research. It presents the data with a content analysis method.

The research was done in the State Islamic Institute of Surakarta for sixth-semester students of English Letters in the academic year 2019/2020. The research was done from February until June 2020. The duration of once teaching and learning process was 100 minutes or two credits per semester.

In this research, the objects of this study are the students' performances in practicing consecutive interpreting and the students' statements about the problems in practicing consecutive interpreting, especially in Miss Ikke Dewi Pratama, S.S., M.Hum's first practice class, which is about describing people.

The subjects of this research are the sixth-semester students of the interpreting class in the English Letters Department in the academic year 2019/2020. The researcher chose twelve students from classes H and I.

To collect the data and get the result of the research's objectives, the writer used two instruments: documentation and interview. This research used the data analysis based on Miles and Huberman Interactive Model (2014): data collection, data condensation, data display, conclusion: drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014: 10).

In this research, there were four kinds to testing the validity of the data namely triangulation sources, triangulation techniques, triangulation theory and triangulation of time.

### 4. Research Findings and Discussions

From an analysis of twelve students' errors in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting, there are 159 data found. There are eight types of errors found in the students' performance videos. The errors found are error in non-conservation of paralinguistic features, omission, distortion, inadequate language proficiency, literal translation, addition, register conservation, protocol, procedure and ethics.

Table 4. 1 Types and Subtypes of Errors Found in Students' Performances

No.	Types	f	%	Subtypes	f	%
1.	Non-Conservation Paralinguistic Features	57	35.8	Filler	34	21.4
				Repeated Words or Phrase	17	10.7
				Incomplete Sentence	6	3.8
2.	Omission	36	22.6	Skipping Omission	18	11.3
				Comprehension Omission	9	5.7
				Delay Omission	7	4.4
	Compounding Omission	2	1.3			
3.	Distortion	21	13.2	Distortion	21	13.3
4.	Inadequate Language Proficiency	17	10.6	Lexical Error	10	6.3
				Grammatical Error	7	4.4
5.	Addition	10	6.3	Relationship Addition	4	2.5
				Elaboration Addition	3	1.9
				Qualifier Addition	3	1.9
				Closure Addition	1	0.6
6.	Literal Translation	8	5.0	Literal Translation	8	5.0
7.	Register Conservation	7	4.4	Informal	7	4.4
8.	Protocol, Procedure and Ethics	2	1.3	Ethics	2	1.3

Based on the table above, the most frequent type of errors faced by the students in English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting is non-conservation paralinguistic features which occurred 57 times or 35.8% of 159 occurrences of errors. The least common error found is protocol, procedure and ethics with 2 occurrences or 1.3%.

The interview result showed that there are eight types of problems faced by the students in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting. Those are nervousity, lack of practice, English proficiency, interpretation partner, classmates, time pressure, confidence and public speaking skill.

Table 4. 2 Types of Problems Faced by the Students in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

No.	Types of Problems	f	%
1.	Nervosity	11	19.6
2.	English Proficiency	11	19.6
3.	Confidence	8	14.3
4.	Lack of Practice	7	12.5
5.	Interpretation Partner	7	12.5
6.	Time Pressure	5	8.9
7.	Classmates	4	7.1
8.	Public Speaking Skill	3	5.4

The most common problem faced by the students is nervousity and English proficiency with 11 voters or 19.6%. The least common of error is public speaking skill with 3 voters or 5.4% and followed by Classmates with 4 voters or 7.1%.

Eleven students from twelve students stated that nervousity and English proficiency is one of problems that affect the most. Then, only three students who stated that public speaking skill is influent problem and four students stated that Classmates or atmosphere affected their interpretation. Each problems seems has relation one and another.

From the statements above, we can see that the students faced more than one problem in practicing consecutive interpreting. The students' average problem is more than four problems. The student who had a good score and did fewer errors tends to have fewer problems too.

#### 4.3 Errors in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

The results showed that this research is different with previous studies by Pratiwi (2016) and Chinh (2010). If the common error did by the students in Pratiwi's (2016) study is addition and frequent mistake did by students in Chinh's (2010) study is speaking which is pronunciation mistakes. In this study, the most frequent error found in students' practices video is non-conservation paralinguistic features.

In some case related to the findings, there are interesting findings about the sixth semester students of English Letters in State Islamic Institute of Surakarta. The students who became interpreters were confused because the students who became the speakers have lack of English proficiency. Therefore, the original text was in wrong structure. The students maybe use English translator tools to translate what they want to say in Indonesian to English but they could not use them properly. It made the English text sounded unnatural. Moreover, the structure sounded Javanese structure-like.

In another hand, there are students who made self-correction during his/her performance. According to Chinh (2010:6), mistake is wrong response made by the students but they have had knowledge about it. Therefore, some students did mistake but they realized it and fixed it as soon as possible.

A good scored student tends to make fewer errors but a mid scored student tends to fix the mistake they realized. It is good for correcting the message by themselves but it is better when they do not make any mistakes. According to Mehboob, Baloch, & Ghilzai (2016), the higher level students tends to recognize and aware with their mistakes. Student who has higher knowledge and awareness of mistake tends to make self-correction in their spoken language. However, student who has low level of knowledge will not recognize his/her mistakes or errors. In some cases, even the students recognized their mistakes or errors they cannot correct it because their lack of English proficiency and vocabulary mastery. It is in line with Chinh (2010), that correcting the students who do not have the knowledge is not feasible and applicable. Therefore, it is better when the students understanding the knowledge first then the lecturer can help the students to improve their interpretation performance.

#### 4.4 Problems in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

Problem is what makes the students did errors in interpreting (Pratiwi 2016). From the interview toward twelve students in H and I class of Interpreting Class, there are eight types of problems faced by the students in practicing

consecutive interpreting. The most frequent problems faced by the students in practicing consecutive interpreting are nervousity and English proficiency.

The results showed that this research has differences with previous studies by Chinh (2010), Ribas (2012), Utami (2016) and slightly similarity with Pratiwi (2016). In Chinh's (2010) study, the most frequent problem is lack of practice and followed by time pressure. Then, in Ribas's (2012) study, the most frequent problems faced by the students is lack of understanding and followed by speed of delivery. Moreover, the most frequent problem faced by the students in Utami's (2016) study is lack of understanding, and then followed by numbers. Last, the most frequent problems faced by the students in Pratiwi's (2016) study is nervousness and lack of language proficiency.

Based on the interview, the students stated that nervousity and English proficiency are the biggest problems they faced. This study is the first interpreting practice about 'describing people'. In term the lack of experience, the students faced nervousity because it was the first experience they came forward in practicing interpreting.

Besides, the interpretation partners' skills of speaking and writing also affect the interpreters' performances. There are interpretation partners or speakers who have bad pronunciation and articulation. Moreover, there are interpretation partners who have broken English structure or Indonesian/Javanese structure-like. It will be confusing the interpreter in rendering the message.

In addition, the differences of English texts in context of level of difficulties and length make the students felt unfair with the interpretation test. Even the lecturer had said that the text was about describing people and the length must be ten sentences long. There are students who made the text longer than ten sentences. Even more, the lecturer did not standardize the students' texts before it is tested. Therefore, the interpretation partner very affects the students' performance.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Errors in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there are eight types of errors did by the students in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting which is 159 occurrences found. The errors found are error in non-conservation of paralinguistic features, omission, distortion, inadequate language proficiency, literal translation, addition, register conservation, protocol, procedure and ethics.

The non-conservation paralinguistic features is the most frequent error did by the students in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting which is 57 occurrences or 35.8% of 159 occurrences and the least common error found is protocol, procedure and ethics (2 occurrences or 1.3%). Those errors were caused by the students' problems themselves. The students who have lack of English proficiency tend to make non-conservation paralinguistic features, omission and distortion error. This happened because the students do not have the knowledge about it or the lecturer has not told about this material. It shows that the English Letters students still have lack in English proficiency and interpreting skill. Moreover, the interpretation partner or the speaker who is bad in English proficiency tends to make bad English structures and it makes the interpreter confused about what they interpret.

In addition, high-scored students tend to make fewer errors than students who have low score in their performance test. Then, student who is high-leveled English proficiency tends to make self-correction. Otherwise, student who has low level in English proficiency do not recognize his/her errors and mistakes. Even the student recognizes the errors and mistakes; the student cannot correct it because of the lack of vocabulary mastery.

### 5.2 Problems in Practicing Consecutive Interpreting

Furthermore, the errors made by the students are caused by the problems they faced in practicing consecutive interpreting. The results show that there are eight types of problems faced by the students in practicing English to Indonesian consecutive interpreting. Those are nervousity, lack of practice, English proficiency, interpretation partner, classmates, time pressure, confidence and public speaking skill.

The problems have correlation each other. For example, when the students have lack of English proficiency but they also have lack of practice and lack of public speaking skill, while the students are not self-assured, it makes the students get nervous and lose their focus. Or, when the students have lack of confidence and the classmates watch them in front of the class, the students get nervous and do many fillers because the need time to think what the message is.

Finally, the students need more practice and knowledge especially in English proficiency and need guide in solving their problems. The lecturer can give the students feedback in correlation with consecutive interpreting errors did by the students and its strategies or solution to solve the problems.

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