

Another Form of Sight Translation

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In sight translation, the interpreter reads a written text and simultaneously produces the translation in the target language. In this other form of sight translation it is the other way round that happens; the interpreter listens to the speaker and simultaneously produces the translation by writing the translation in the computer and the translation can be seen by the audience along with the speaker's speech because it is projected in the screen. In this paper the advantages and limitations and also the requirements of this kind of translation will be described using the real examples taken from events that use this form of sight translation.

Key words: sight translation, sight interpreting, translator, interpreter

Pada *sight translation*, penerjemah membaca teks dan sekaligus menerjemahkan ke dalam bahasa sasaran. Pada bentuk *sight translation* yang dibahas di sini, penerjemah mendengarkan pembicara dan langsung menuliskannya pada komputer sehingga tampak di layar LCD dan hadirin bisa membacanya dalam bahasa Indonesia pada waktu yang bersamaan mereka mendengar pembicara dalam bahasa. Dalam makalah ini dijabarkan keuntungan dan batasan serta syarat-syarat yang diperlukan dalam penerjemahan jenis ini dengan mengambil contoh-contoh dari apa yang sudah dilakukan.

Key words: sight translation, sight interpreting, translator, interpreter

Introduction

In big cities in Indonesia like Surabaya or Jakarta, a lot of people speak and understand English. Problems come in a conference with an English speaker when the majority speaks English, but there are also some people in the audience who do not understand English at all or are only able to understand a little English. If consecutive interpreting is employed, many people consider it a waste of time because the time allocated for the session will be twice as much, the time for English and the time for the Indonesian translation. This was the situation where I, as the interpreter of a conference in 2013, decided to try this new form of sight translation. At that time the committee of the conference did not have the tools to have simultaneous interpreting, although I was ready to do it. If interpretation was not carried out, the audience who did not understand English was neglected. Therefore, I decided to do the other form of sight translation. Its advantages and disadvantages and also its requirements will be described using the real examples.

Methodology

Below is described where and how this form of sight translation was carried out several times. After several times doing this kind of sight translation, I reflected on the experience and wrote the result of the reflection in this paper.

Occasions Where It Was Used

The first experience actually occurred in the First National Convention of Indonesian Catholic Businessmen and Professionals (PUKAT) held at the ballroom of Meritus Hotel (now Pullman Hotel), in Surabaya, on June 28 – 30, 2013, with speakers from the Philippines and the U.S. Around 300 people from all parts of Indonesia attended the convention. Most of them understood the speakers from the US and the Philippines who used English in their talks. Therefore, the committee thought that in the second session, interpreting was not needed as it was in the first session. However, there were several people who did not understand English at all and; they said that they decided to go home because they did not understand the language used in the convention although they had paid the convention fee. As I saw the running text on the screen, I had an idea to try this other form of sight translation, with the agreement of the committee, to accommodate the few unfortunate audience. In other occasions this kind of translation was also used such as in the Retreat for Catholic Businessmen and Professionals at Bintang Kejora Retreat House in Pacet, Mojokerto, (around 40 km from Surabaya) on June 13-15, 2014 with an audience of 30 people with the same speakers as the first. It was also used in the seminar on Teaching on Evangelization with a speaker from the U.S. at Srijaya Building, Surabaya, on August 21, 2013 where more than 500 people attended the program. In the request letter the committee specified the manner of translation by writing “dengan cara pengetikan langsung dari komputer ke proyektor” (by typing directly in the computer projected on the screen). It was also used in the Meeting for Community Leaders held in Sasana Kriya Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, Jakarta, with a speaker from Italy on September 14, 2013 where more than 700 people came.

How Was It Carried Out?

In a consecutive interpreting in a conference, the interpreter stands or sits with the speaker and s/he listens to the speaker; the speaker then stops talking to give a chance to the interpreter to say what the speaker says in the target language. In simultaneous interpreting the interpreter does not stand or sits near the speaker and the interpreting is done simultaneously as the speaker is speaking. The audience wears a headphone so that they can hear the translation in the target language. In sight translation, the interpreter reads a written text and simultaneously produces the translation orally in the target language for the audience. For the activity that I had done, in this other form of sight translation—I use this term because I could not find the name for the activity I had done—it is the other way round that happened.

In this kind of sight translation, where the speaker used English and the target language was Indonesian, I listened to the speaker speaking in English and simultaneously produced the

Indonesian translation by typing the Indonesian translation on the computer and the Indonesian translation was projected on the screen so that the audience could see it while listening to the speaker's speech in English. At all times I used MS Word because that was largest space I could find compared to power point. At the first time I did it, I did not sit near the speaker, but at the back of the room typing on a computer. In the small meeting, I sat near the speaker, at the side of the room.

Result and Discussion

There are several points that need to be paid attention to in carrying out this kind of sight translation. **First**, the size font should be big enough for the audience to see. In the appendix a real example taken from the file used in Srijaya building is given, in terms of the size of the font, the abbreviation, and the spelling mistake. The size of the font used can be varied according to the size of the room. The bigger the room is, the bigger the size font is. **Second**, since the interpreter races with time—the speed of speaking is faster than the speed of typing—abbreviation can be used and the abbreviation used should be understandable for the audience. In the activities that I did, I simply omit the vowels, e.g. *bhs* for *bahasa*. I use the common meaning, e.g. *sbb- sebagai berikut, tdk-tidak*. **Third**, as in any kind of interpreting, if the speaker speaks very fast, main ideas are the first priorities and details come second. **Fourth**, it is good to try the keyboard first because if it is oversensitive, the cursor can jump here and there and this will prolong the time for typing and can distract the interpreter's concentration. As a result, some important points might not be communicated to the audience. **Fifth**, it is necessary to inform the speaker beforehand that this kind of translation will be used since speakers sometimes are not aware if interpreters need time to translate, let alone different kinds of translation and interpreting. If the speaker is informed that this form of translation is used and they speak in a normal speed, the translator is able to type the translation and the translation will be better than when the speaker speaks very fast (like a person who is excited). "It is imperative that both consumers and providers of interpreter services understand the issues around on-the-spot translation by interpreters in order to ensure the highest quality of service" (The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, 2009). **Sixth**, where the speaker stands should be taken into consideration so that he does not bother the audience to see the screen containing the translation. Special section can be allocated for the audience that needs this kind of translation.

Advantages and Limitations

There are both advantages and limitations in using this form of translation. The first advantage is that there is a win-win solution when in a conference, the majority understands English, but there are also people who do not understand English at all. This form of sight translation can satisfy the small number of people who need translation and the majority will not be bothered by the voice interpreting. If the committee does not know whether or not people still need translation, this form can be employed because it does not double the time as it is with interpreting. Those who need the translation can see it on the screen; those who do not need can listen to the speaker. Second, this form of sight translation can be used as an alternative to sign language interpreting if a sign language interpreter is not available and there are people who need it in the audience. Third, the text on screen can be saved for a record; there will be two records for this kind of occasion: the video file of the speaker and also the typed file.

In spite of the advantages, there are some points or limitations that I observed. First, if the keyboard was oversensitive and the cursor kept on jumping here and there, the translation on screen was not complete. Much information was lost. Second, since the program used was still MS Word, the translation on screen reached the bottom of the screen which prevented the audience in the back to see it clearly.

The Term of Sight Translation

The term of sight translation and sight interpretation are still confusing in terms of its clarity of reference. This can be seen in the explanation given by a certified translator and certified conference interpreter who has degrees in Arabic and Middle East History and have a thirty-year experience of teaching translating and interpreting in Canada, Spain and elsewhere, and of research and now retired in Spain.

Then there is yet another mode of input, known in some professional circles as *sight interpreting* and not to be confused with sight translation (though if you google *sight interpreting vs sight translation* you'll see that many people are in fact confused). In this mode the interpreter both listens to the speaker and reads from the printed text at the same time.
http://unprofessionaltranslation.blogspot.com/2013/07/sight-interpreting_12.html

The same definition of sight interpretation can be seen in <http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=578712> “sight interpretation: real time interpretation for which the interpreter uses the text of the speech to translate while the speaker is speaking at the same time.” According to these two explanations, in sight interpreting the

interpreter both listens to the speaker and reads from the printed text at the same time, such as in interpreting a prepared speech.

In these two websites, however, the two are regarded the same. In this site, <http://www.senecacollege.ca/ce/classes/LNI103.html>, “Sight translation, **sometimes referred to as sight interpretation**, is a hybrid of interpreting and translation.” In <http://www.speakyourlanguages.com/courses/unit01/sig07/02sig07.htm> it is mentioned that

when an interpreter is given a written document in one language and asked to read it aloud in another language, the interpreter is being asked to do **sight translation**. Because this is a combination of text and speech, it has elements of both translating and interpreting. This is sometimes referred to as "**sight interpreting**," but "**sight translation**" is the more common term.

According to these two references, the two names can be used interchangeably. This also happens in the website of American Bureau of Professional Translators <http://www.abpt.com/escort-12-1.html> entitled **Sight Interpretation**, the explanation mentioned is as follows

Sight translation has traditionally been regarded as a part of simultaneous and consecutive interpretation...Even though there are similarities, the overall process is different. In sight translation, the translator reads a written text, whereas the interpreter, in both consecutive and the simultaneous modes, listens to a speaker.

In the three websites above the two names can be used interchangeably.

In http://mlingua.pl/eng/services/interpretation/sight_interpreting.html it is not mentioned that the interpreter listens to a speaker, but just “Sight interpretation is interpretation of a written text received by the translator, usually without any time for preparation.” About sight translation, Phelan (2001, p. 13) **says**, “interpreters are often asked to read and translate documents aloud ... For example, an interpreter working at a business meeting... Interpreters may need time to peruse the document in detail and if this is the case they should request that time. The definitions are the same in these two websites, but the names are different.

In the following websites the writers use “sight translation.” “The sight translation is referred to the rendering of material written in one language into spoken speech in another language”(<http://courts.alaska.gov/language/modes-interpreting.pdf>). The same explanation can be seen in what Ersozlu says about sight translation (<http://www.translationdirectory.com/article755.htm>): “the translator reads a written text, whereas the interpreter, in both consecutive and the simultaneous modes, listens to a speaker.”

In short, there are three different opinions. The first group use the term of sight interpreting if there is an additional input for the interpreter, namely listening to the speaker, while reading the text and producing the translation aloud. The second group regards both terms the same; they can be used interchangeably. The last group uses the term of sight translation when the interpreter reads the text and produces the translation aloud.

Since there is a little confusion about the name of sight translation and sight interpretation, in order to differentiate one from another, probably it is good to see the two names based on what the translator/interpreter does. In interpreting an interpreter produces the translation with voice; therefore, the rendering of a written text with voice—whether or not the interpreter listens to a speaker—can be called sight interpretation. Meanwhile, the written rendering of a text, although the input is the voice of the speaker—like the one I did, can be called sight translation, since a translator does written work.

Conclusion

Although there is not much literature, but much confusion on sight interpreting and also sight translation—both in the meaning of this form of sight translation or the general understanding of it, this hybrid between interpretation and translation is worth paying attention to in the practice of translation and interpreting. It is worth paying attention to it more than just an exercise for students studying interpretation or translation because it needs skills to do it.

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Biodata

Julia Eka Rini has been teaching at Petra Christian University since 1992. She has also been an interpreter and a translator since 1984 . Her research interests are translation and language acquisition.

Appendix

Selaamat
malam. Yang
pertama, saya
mohon maaf
tidak bisa bhs
Indonesia.