

## **PREDOMINANT DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENT DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETING**

**Farah Diba<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Jum'a Khatib Nur Ali<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Gunadarma University, Jl. Margonda Raya No. 100, Depok 16424, Jawa Barat

*Corresponding Author(S): dibafarah84@gmail.com*

### **Abstract:**

This objective of this research is to find out the predominant difficulties encountered by English department students during the first phase of consecutive interpreting. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method and conducted using the theory of Ribas (2012). The source of data of this research is BBC News video entitled "The Devastating Impact of War on the Lives of Ukraine's Children". The result of this research shows that lack of practice in listening is the predominant difficulty encountered by students. Whereas, the least difficulty encountered is lack of common sense. The message conveyed in the source language may be radically different for the listeners in the target language. Subsequently, interpreter encountered difficulties in attempting to create the equivalence. Therefore, it shows how much time is needed and it requires a certain amount of practice to be able to produce a good quality of interpretation.

### **Keywords:**

Consecutive interpreting;  
Difficulties;  
Interpretation



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Language as a mode of communication enables people to express themselves in the everyday life using symbols of sound produced by the speech organs. Language serves as communication instrument that helps create social interaction. When communicating using language, it is expected that communication can be conveyed correctly and precisely so that listeners or recipients will understand what the speaker is intended. However, communication difficulties are a common occurrence in this rapid era of globalization. Particularly when interlanguage communication occurs.

Interlanguage communication, as defined by Nuswantoro, F. D. (2013, p. 2) is a situation in which two different languages are used during a conversation or interaction, indicating that two different cultures also intricate. To avoid these difficulties, therefore, an interpreter (as an oral translator) is needed in bridging communication between two parties who have cultural differences, notably in language.

Translating and interpreting in general, is the transfer of messages from the source language to the target language. Both purposes so that the message delivered by the

speaker or writer from the source language can be received by the listener or reader in the target language. As Weber differentiate translation and interpreting as:

“Translation is the transposition of a text written in a source language into a target language, while interpretation is the oral transposition of an orally delivered message at a conference or a meeting from a source language into a target language, performed in the presence of participants” (Dr. Andang Saehu, 2018, p. 11).

As can be inferred from the above definition, interpreting and translating are closely related. The modes of translation or the process of transferring the message can be used to distinguish between interpreting and translating. While interpreting is a type of translation that is usually done or conducted orally, translating is typically done or performed in writing (written form).

Although the two practices show certain similarities, it is clearly stated that the two practices conducted differently. However, apart from the distinction in the medium, there are significant variations in both professions' skill, talents and training. A good set of qualified abilities are essentials for an interpreter because of the short amount of time they had to translate utterances from a source language into a target language.

According to Hastuningdyah, an interpreter is expected to be qualified in both the source and target languages, have an excellent listening skill, and have good speaking and utterance abilities (2019, p. 58). In addition, Mahmoodzadeh in Nosratzadegan, N. stated that “listening and speaking are the dominant skills of an interpreter whereas their weak points are mainly concentrated on reading and writing. On the other hand, for translators, they are mostly weak at listening and speaking compared to reading and writing” (2014, p. 57).

A communication can only run smoothly if both speaker and the listener – or the writer and the reader – understand each other. However, when interlanguage communication occurs, interpreters may encounter difficulties while interpreting the utterances; which cause problems in conveying the message from a source language into a target language. Following are the categories Ribas (2012) uses to classifies the problems or difficulties according to interpreting phases.

**Table 1** General Breakdown of Interpreting Difficulties

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**Listening and Understanding**

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  
 Lack of attention/concentration

**Note-Taking**

Lack of understanding of the source speech  
 Speed of delivery of the source speech  
 Information density

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Lack of practice
Numbers
<b>Decoding Notes</b>
Unable to understand their own notes
Lack of restitution speed
Lack of connectors
Unclear notes
Memory problems
<b>Expressing and Reformulating</b>
Lack of understanding of the source speech
Feeling nervous
Lack of confidence
Unclear notes
Overuse of connectors
Problems expressing themselves

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Based on the table above, it is evident that difficulties can be broadly classified into a number of groups, ranging from those that are directly related to interpreting procedures to those that are related to the respondents' abilities.

Further research on how to learn and the effectiveness of interpreting for students in language study programs still needs to be carried. This is due to the essential interpretation in this globalization era. We frequently deal with interlanguage communication due to globalization and international relations factors that are developing far more as time goes by. Cultures as well as linguistic differences play a role in interlanguage communication. Interpreters may encounter various challenges when rendering utterances from the source language into the target language as a result of this circumstances.

## **METHOD**

Based on the focus of the research, the researcher uses a qualitative method to conduct the research. According to Ali (2018) "Qualitative research is a research procedure that involves observation, interpretation and reporting of research results descriptively" (p. 85). The expected results are related to the quality of the process and interpretation results in news reporting. Furthermore, this research involves respondents as a reference in measuring the quality of consecutive interpreting process.

The source of the data is the interpretation of the respondents and the text of the video transcript. The data are the results of the interpretation and the results of the respondent's questionnaire on the consecutive interpreting process of the BBC news video entitled *The Devastating Impact of War on the Lives of Ukraine's Children*.

In order to gather data for this research, the researcher uses two research instruments: the first one is a questionnaire instrument and the second one is observation instrument. Both to determine the respondent's difficulties in consecutive process. According to Arikunto in Nugroho "a questionnaire instrument is a set of questions used to gain information from the respondents related to their personality and other matters related to the research material" (2018, p. 19) Whereas observation instrument is a technique places humans as research instruments. In other words, the data obtained from the observation researchers" Ali (2018, p. 99).

The steps to gather research data are; (1) determine students' respondents randomly based on criteria; English Department students who are taking an interpreting course. (2) providing English news video with standard and general language usage criteria for respondents to interpret. (3) documenting the respondent's consecutive interpreting process for the news video provided. (4) generate transcription for respondent's voice recording. (5) provide a questionnaire instrument based in the theory of Ribas (2012) related to difficulties in consecutive interpreting to respondents.

The procedure in processing and analyzing the data are; (1) classifying the questionnaire results based on Ribas (2012) theory of interpreting difficulties, (2) determining whether the difficulties are proven by the interpretation results or not, (3) analyze and describe the data, (4) and draw conclusion based on the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to table 1 presented below, it shows the data of respondent's results regarding the difficulties during the first phase of consecutive interpreting (listening and understanding) based on Ribas (2012). Difficulties presented measured based on the percentage of students encountered. The results of the questionnaire are shown below:

**Table 1** Difficulties during the First Phase of Consecutive Interpreting

INTERPRETING PHASES	DIFFICULTIES	FREQUENCY (%)
Listening and understanding	Lack of message understanding	50
	Lack of topic understanding	40
	Difficulty in listening & understanding numbers	50
	Lack of common sense	10
	Speed of delivery of the source speech	10
	Sound problems	0
	Length of the source speech	0
	Information density	0
	Lack of practice in listening	80
	Lack of attention/concentration	60

**Source: Difficulties in Consecutive Interpreting based on respondent's questionnaire result**

From table 1 it can be seen how various difficulties encountered by the students, ranging from those that are directly related to interpreting procedures to those that are related to the respondents' personal factors. Based on the results, the researcher inferred the predominant and the least difficulty encountered by the students during the first phase of consecutive interpreting.

**Table 2** Predominant Difficulties in the First Phase of Consecutive Interpreting

INTERPRETING PHASES	DIFFICULTIES	FREQUENCY (%)
Listening and understanding	Lack of practice in listening	80
	Lack of attention/concentration in listening	60
	Lack of common sense	10

**Source: Difficulties in Consecutive Interpreting based on respondent's questionnaire result**

From the first phase of interpreting (listening and understanding), the researcher found the predominant difficulties and the least encountered difficulty by the students. Based on table 2 above, out of 10 difficulties, lack of practice in listening was the most encountered by students. Followed by lack of attention/concentration which was the

second most encountered, and lack of common sense becoming the least difficulty encountered by the students.

As it has been stated earlier that listening is one of the skills required of a qualified interpreter. However, it is implied in table 2, 80% of the student interpreter mainly encountered difficulty towards lack of practice in listening during the first phase of consecutive interpreting. As categorized by Ribas (2012) lack of practice is one of difficulty that may occur during the process of interpreting. As stated by Mahmoodzadeh in Nosratzadegan “a qualified interpreter features are to have good listening skills (2014, p. 57). Therefore, it can be inferred from the results that lack of practice in listening is a difficulty an interpreter encounter during consecutive interpreting because it leads to missing words, phrase or clause. In addition, it gives the effect of low quality of their interpretation, such as incomplete sentences or even being unable to interpret the utterances as a whole because of the lack of practice in listening. Besides that, Ribas also explained that “it requires a certain amount of practice to be able to interpret effectively” (2012, p. 830)

Referring to the concept of difficulties, Ribas explained “it is possible that beginners mistake problems of lack of attention and concentration, which are truly at the root of their difficulties, for technical problems” (2012, p. 829). Due to lack of attention/concentration, 60% of students (see table 2) have encountered difficulty in paying attention and concentrating while listening to the speech video, which directly affects their understanding towards the speech video. The researcher inferred that this particular difficulty was also cause by their lack of practice in listening, which was their predominant difficulty in the first phase of consecutive interpreting.

Despite their difficulties with the lack of practice in listening and lack of attention/concentration, only 10% of students responded experiencing lack of common sense during interpreting the source speech video. The researcher inferred that it became the least difficulty encountered by the students during the first phase of consecutive interpreting.

## CONCLUSION

Referring to the results of the research, the researcher concluded, from a total of 10 difficulties found in the first phase of consecutive interpreting stated by Ribas (2012); lack of practice in listening discovered to be the most encountered difficulty by the students during the first phase of consecutive interpreting. Followed by lack of attention/concentrating which was the second most encountered difficulty. In addition, the researcher also discovered that the least encountered difficulty by students was lack of common sense.

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