

Empowering Community Interpreters' Competence Through Appropriate Work Attitudes: A Case Study on Interpreting in a Religious Setting

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Abstract—An interpreter should have special knowledge, skills, and appropriate work attitudes and behavior, reflected in their performance while doing their interpreting tasks. This study aimed to investigate the work attitude possessed by the Community Service Interpreters in Religious Settings in Indonesia and its relations to develop their competencies. This study used a descriptive method. The source of data was videos of two interpreters doing their tasks in two different religious activities. Three professional interpreters were taken as the respondents of this study, who were asked to assess the work attitudes implemented by each of the interpreters in the videos. The data were analyzed using a 5-Point Likert Scale. The results indicate that the two interpreters have good and appropriate work attitudes, and their attitudes positively contribute to their interpreting competence.

Index Terms—interpreting, religious setting, community interpreter, work attitude, interpreter competence

I. INTRODUCTION

Along with science and technology development, the transfer of information from foreign language has made English skills and translation activities crucial. As a global language, English is used to communicate between countries that speak different languages. Therefore, the role of a translator or an interpreter is increasingly important. Interpretation does not only occur in the fields of science and technology, but it also occurs in other fields, including economic, social, political, and religious fields. Today, many religious events in Indonesia invite evangelists (preachers) from abroad to preach or give a lecture. Such events obviously need interpreting services. Moreover, in this era of development, many churches conduct online services, which can be watched by everyone from all around the globe. This is one of the reasons behind the emergence of interpretation in the religious sector.

Interpretation within any religious activities requires caution, concentration, and accuracy since it is a sensitive area and every religion has different teachings and beliefs. Therefore, community interpreters who are assigned to interpret lectures or sermons must be competent in order to provide accurate messages contained in the lectures. This is also a reason why not everyone can be assigned to be the interpreter in a certain sermon or religious event. Misinterpretation of the preacher's actual message can give dire consequences for the viewers/listeners (in this case, all Christians who watch the online service, or who attend it directly). The actual message of the preacher will not reach them; hence misguiding them.

Therefore, community interpreters (especially those who are assigned on religious events) must be competent. Their good competence will lead to accurate and correct messages of the sermon delivered to the audience; without any hidden or incorrect meaning. Interpreter competence has four important components, all of which are equally crucial for an interpreter. One of them is work attitude. Having knowledge and skills alone is not enough for interpreters to do their duties perfectly since they also act as the speakers accompanying the preacher. Therefore, other than mastery of

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language, culture, and skills, the interpreters must also have a good work attitude, with which they can be more professional in doing their duties and responsibilities.

Translator and interpreter associations usually have competency standards guiding translators and interpreters in doing their professional tasks and evaluating their performance. However, the associations of translators and interpreters in Indonesia do not yet have their own competency standards. As a result, they use the competency standards that are established in a foreign country (e.g., in Australia), named NAATI, which is basically a certification body for both translators and interpreters there.

NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters), or the Certification Institute for Translators and Interpreters in Australia, has established a certification scheme to protect the public interest, namely by ensuring that the practitioners (translators and interpreters) have an agreed level of knowledge and skills as a minimum standard to engage in professional translation and interpretation practices. It will contain identification of the competencies and KSA (Knowledge, Skills, Attributes - or Knowledge, Skills, and other supporting Attributes) that must be possessed by an interpreter.

Several interpreters' competencies proposed by NAATI include: (a) linguistic competency; (b) intercultural competency; (c) research competency; (d) technological competency; (e) thematic competency; (f) transfer competency; (g) service provision competency; (h) ethical competency; etc. (NAATI. 2016). They must also be balanced with appropriate work attitudes and behavior since the latter (i.e., ethical competency) greatly contributes to the interpreter's competency and affects the effectiveness of the interpreter in doing their tasks. In other words, although mastery of knowledge and skills is the basic asset for an interpreter; work attitudes and behavior are the ones able to improve their ability and competence. This confirms Van Looy et al. (2003) who argue that competence is "a human characteristic related to how effective a person's performance can be seen from their action, behavior, and way of thinking".

Interpretation, especially in religious events, is a hard task. In addition to having good knowledge and skills, the interpreters must also possess appropriate work attitudes and behavior to help them on stage. Mastery of language and culture, good skills, and appropriate work attitudes and behavior will determine the professionalism of the interpreter, hence showing their competence. Work attitudes and behavior are often referred to as "interpreter's characteristics" or "interpreter's attribute". According to NAATI (2016), some of the crucial attributes required by either simultaneous or consecutive interpreter in professional interpreting include: (i) observant, being observant to details and thorough in completing the whole duty; (ii) thrives to excel, motivated to improve and work consistently; (iii) reliable, dependable and responsible in fulfilling all duties; (iv) willing to learn, willing to be active and constantly improve knowledge and skills; (v) objective, able to separate personal feelings or opinions; (vi) respectful, being sensitive to others' feelings, desires, and rights; (vii) collaborative, able to work effectively and efficiently with others; (viii) self-reflection, aware of one's own limitations (knowledge and skills, behavior and beliefs, as well as the influence that they possess on stage); and (ix) problem solving, able to identify and find effective solutions to existing problems so as to achieve the established goals.

Furthermore, Pochhacker (2004) argues that interpreter competence can be divided into two areas, i.e., personal qualities and abilities and special skills and expertise. The personal qualities include tact, discretion, alertness, confidence, professionalism, responsibility, optimism, and poise. This indicates that an interpreter must reflect wisdom, professionalism, responsibility, optimism, calmness, and confidence in doing their duty. This idea confirms the previous literature that interpreters must possess appropriate work attitudes in doing their duties (Gile, 2000; Gentile et al., 1996). Furthermore, Gile (1995) and Gentile et al. (1996) also proposed several other work attitudes, such as stress resistance, the ability to control oneself (having good emotional stability), and the ability to work with others, that must also be owned by an interpreter; be it simultaneous or consecutive.

Other than the various work attitudes mentioned above, the Decree of the Indonesia's Minister of Manpower Number 205 of 2021 regarding Indonesian National Competency Standard (SKKNI) for the category of Professional, Scientific, and Technical Activity in the Occupation of Community Interpreters states that a professional attitude at work, responsibility to complete any work, and responsibility to uphold the code of ethics and code of conduct of an interpreter must be considered before starting to work on the interpretation (Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

Considering the absence of competency standards for interpreters in Indonesia and the fact that Indonesian interpreters use the interpreter competency standards applicable in the other country (i.e., Australia), the empirical study on interpreter competency standards for Indonesian interpreters is necessary to be conducted. In addition, the importance of work attitude in doing professional interpreting mentioned in the previous studies needs further investigation. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the work attitude possessed by the Community Service Interpreters in Religious Settings in Indonesia and its relations to develop their competencies.

II. METHODS

This study used a descriptive method. The source of data was videos of two interpreters doing their tasks in two different religious activities. Each of the videos showed different interpreters. The first video (downloaded from <https://youtu.be/T5r0htv7Vz4?si=CsscIVr4viwDnjaI>) contained the interpreting to the English speech delivered by Ev. John Hartman in a Christian religious event through a spiritual refreshment program. The second video (downloaded

from <https://youtu.be/dpkCickZ7yE?si=Srxz5ywD6kqeP5GX>) was the interpreting to the English speech delivered by Ps. Benny Hinn in a Revival Meeting. In the video, both speeches were interpreted by two different Indonesian interpreters. For the research ethics reason, the names of the interpreters are not mentioned in this paper, they are identified as Interpreter 1 (I1) and Interpreter 2 (I2). Three professional interpreters meeting the desired criteria were taken as the respondents of this study, who were asked to assess the work attitudes implemented by each of the interpreters in the videos. They were then called the raters in this study. They were asked to carefully watch the videos and observe the attitude performed by each of the interpreters.

The assessment used a closed questionnaire containing 10 items with five responses, i.e., Very Good (VG), Good (G), Fair (F), Bad (B), and Poor (P). The items were related to the interpreter work attitude while doing their tasks. The items were formulated based on the parameters of consecutive interpreting competencies formulated by NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters); the Decree of the Indonesia's Minister of Manpower Number 205 of 2021, and several authors' works (including Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Pochhacker, 2004). The data were analyzed using a 5-Point Likert Scale, and the results were displayed in a table.

III. RESULTS

The results of the assessment on the interpreters' works attitude while interpreting the speeches are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT ON THE INTERPRETERS' WORK ATTITUDE

No	Statement	P		B		F		G		VG		Score		Percentage	
		I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2	I1	I2
1	Work Endurance (Interpreter's ability to interpret within a long work duration).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
2	Interpreter's professionalism (able to position oneself in understanding the existing duty and responsibility, as well as to focus on the duties at hand)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	14	15	93%	100%
3	Responsibility in finishing all assignments (until the event is finished) and in time management at work.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
4	Interpreter's emotional stability (able to control the emotion, hence hindering it from tampering with the duties at hand).	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
5	Interpreter's cooperation with other people (in this case, the preacher)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	14	15	93%	100%
6	Impartiality in conducting the task of a consecutive community interpreter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	15	15	100%	100%
7	Interpreter's pro-active attitude during the interpretation process	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	13	15	87%	100%
8	Interpreter's wise attitude (able to decide the appropriate behavior in a hard situation or when a problem occurs in the interpretation process)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	14	14	93%	93%
9	Interpreter's quick response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	15	14	100%	93%
10	Interpreter's optimism (able to maintain positivity throughout the whole interpretation process)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	15	14	100%	93%
ATTITUDE (TOTAL)		0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	25	27	145	147	97%	98%

The results of the observations and assessments done by the raters indicate that both interpreters have very good interpreter attitudes and behavior. The first interpreter (I1) possesses 6 out of 10 interpreter attitudes and behavior, while the second interpreter (I2) possesses 7 out of 10 interpreter attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, the results show that the total score of both interpreters is almost 100 (I1 gains 97 and I2 gains 98). These results confirm that both interpreters are very good interpreters in terms of their attitude and behavior.

Moreover, the results displayed in Table 1 also show that both interpreters were given a perfect score (100%) in the four questionnaire items – endurance, responsibility, emotional stability, and impartiality. This means that (i) they have the ability to interpret within a long work duration; (ii) they have the ability to manage their interpreting tasks timely; (iii) they have the ability to control their emotion, hence hindering it from tampering with the duties at hand; and (iv) they have the ability to place themselves in a neutral position by not taking sides to any party.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. *Work Endurance*

Based on the results of the data analysis, both interpreters (as the objects of this research) have perfect work endurance (with a total score of 15 and a percentage of 100%). This means that the three raters have given the highest score to both interpreters. Their ability to complete their services is the reason behind their very good endurance. They remain enthusiastic in interpreting the sermon and revival meeting although each lasted more than 1 hour (the duration of the sermon led by Ev. John Hartman lasted 16 minutes per scene, while the one led by Ps. Benny Hinn, the first scene lasted 55 minutes and the second lasted 2 hours 22 minutes). The constantly loud and clear volume, bright facial expressions, and upright posture show how good their work endurance is.

Maintaining physical strength to remain healthy and have high endurance is the first step that interpreters must take before doing their duties, especially in various events in community interpreting, which usually only involve one interpreter (Hale, 2007; Nolan, 2005). Moreover, good work endurance can also contribute positively to the interpreters' competence and affect the quality of their interpretation. It can be seen clearly through the interpretation done by both research objects.

This research finds that Stern and Liu (2019) research is in accordance with the concept of "interpreter's competence" provided by Pochhacker (2004) and Nolan (2005), which says that regarding an interpreter's competence, the first thing that must be paid attention to by interpreters is to maintain their stamina, so that they can stay healthy during the interpreting session. In addition, the concept mentioned by Hale (2007) also states that, "Even a simple attitude can significantly affect an interpreter, especially in producing accurate interpretation".

B. *Professionalism*

A professional interpreter certainly has competence and good work performance. Based on the results of the data analysis in this research, the total score for the interpreter work attitude component given to the first interpreter is 145, while the second interpreter gains the total score of 147. Therefore, it is safe to say that both interpreters belong to the category of very good "consecutive interpreters", meaning they are competent. The good performances done by both interpreters are apparent through the quality of their interpretation, in which they can deliver the messages uttered by the preachers fluently and accurately. The results confirm the previous studies' findings that interpreter's competence can greatly affect the quality of their interpretation (Kaczmarek, 2010; Khrisna, 2008; Liu, 2020).

C. *Responsibility*

Based on the data analysis, the rating of this component for all research subjects is 15 - with a percentage of 100%. The results of this study confirm that both interpreters are responsible to complete their duties and are very capable of managing their interpreting time. They do not ask other interpreters to replace them before they complete their interpreting tasks. By relying on their knowledge and various interpretation skills, both interpreters have successfully completed their work flawlessly.

The results of this study are consistent with the concept of interpreter competence proposed in the previous studies and literature (Dai, 2021; Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021; Pochhacker, 2004). A good sense of responsibility at work is significantly related to a worker's (in this case, an interpreter) competence, in which it also positively contributes to the quality of the duties done (in this case, the interpreting).

D. *Emotional Stability*

The results of this study show that both interpreters have excellent emotional stability. With a long work duration, they can still control themselves to complete their duties. The long events, which require them to keep accompanying the preachers in a long duration, certainly make them exhausted. However, they still manage to control their fatigue by showing cheerful and enthusiastic facial expressions, even until the end of the events. This excellent emotional stability positively affects the quality of their interpretation. It is apparent through the videos which show that each of them is still focused on listening, observing, and even delivering all the messages conveyed by the preachers.

In addition, good self-control and emotional stability possessed by both interpreters also contribute positively to the accuracy of the messages delivered, as well as significantly related to their interpreting competence. This is why having good emotional stability when interpreting is important for a community interpreter. The result of this study confirms the concept of "interpreter's characteristics" proposed in the previous studies (Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Lee, 2008; Pochhacker, 2004). These studies propose that the competency of a community interpreter is not only determined by their mastery of knowledge and skills, but also by various work attitudes, including their emotional stability.

E. *Cooperation*

The form of cooperation done by both interpreters can be seen through their communication and interaction with the preachers. All the speeches delivered by the preachers can be well understood by the interpreters, and they can also deliver them to the audience fluently and accurately. The results of this study signify that both interpreters can cooperate with other people, including with the implementation committee. This is apparent from their smooth and fluent interpretation. The results then conform the concept of interpreter competency proposed in the previous studies

and literature (Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; NAATI, 2016), which states that other than mastery of knowledge and skills, consecutive and simultaneous interpreters must also possess good sense of cooperation (can cooperate) with other people.

F. Impartiality

An interpreter must also be impartial (neutral) to any party. This work attitude is one of the ethical codes which an interpreter must do. Doing duties based on the professional code of ethics can indicate the interpreter's professionalism at work. Interpreters are categorized as professional interpreters if they fulfill three professional codes of ethics, one of which is being impartial. In their professional interpreting practice, interpreters often work with lawyers, doctors, pastors, and other professional workers who have certain areas which normally cannot be accessed by other parties (Khrisna, 2008). Therefore, impartiality is important for an interpreter with which an interpreter must not add, subtract, or disregard the original message delivered by the speaker. The results of this study show that both interpreters can already be considered as professional interpreters. This is proven through the way they deliver the preachers' messages in the target language to the audience. They can deliver the messages correctly and accurately; without any additions, subtractions, or even omission which may misguide the faith and confidence of the audience/viewers (all Christians around the world). The results of this study confirm the previous studies and literature that community interpreters must be neutral (impartial) at work (Dai, 2021; Puspani, 2010; Zhang & Wang, 2021; Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

G. Proactiveness

The results of this study indicate that both interpreters have the initiatives and are active during the interpreting process. The different scores given to the interpreters are caused by the type of the event. The second interpreter is involved in a much larger scale event which makes him look more initiative and active. In addition, the event where the second interpreter does his tasks is more complex that requires him to act on his own initiative more frequently. The results are consistent with the previous research finding that different interpreting types require different cognitive loads and complexity (Lin et al., 2021).

H. Wisdom

Interpreting activities can be conducted in different events (big or small events) or in different places (indoor out outdoor); therefore, many factors can affect the quality of the interpretation (Khrisna, 2008; Pochhacker, 2004; Puspani 2010). For instance, the limited time and speed of the speaker's speech may cause the interpreter to experience difficulties (Chunli et al., 2021). Furthermore, the condition in the room that is not conducive (maybe due to malfunctioning sound system or lighting) can also disturb the interpreter, including the background noise (Quoc, 2022).

In order to deal with these problems, an interpreter must be able to act wisely, evaluating the problems carefully before making a decision (Tarigan et al., 2022). By thinking quickly, the interpreter must decide what to do so that those problems will not disturb their focus while interpreting. The results of this study show that both interpreters are wise in dealing with the obstacles encountered in the interpreting process. They manage to deal with all the problems during the events smoothly. This finding confirms the previous studies arguing that choosing the appropriate interpretation strategies or techniques wisely can positively affect the quality of the interpreting (Dai, 2021; Gentile et al., 1996; Gile, 2000; Pochhacker, 2004). This implies that interpreting wisdom is determined by the interpreter's ability to cope with certain difficulties or obstacles during the interpreting.

I. Responsiveness

The results of this study found several factors related to the interpreters' level of responsiveness. First, the interpreters' responsive ability is apparent through their interpreting speed. Second, none of the messages in the source language is overlooked or ignored by them. Third, a quick-response ability is also apparent from their ability to respond to everything that happens during the events. They are not only responsible for completing the interpretation of the sermon (which is their main duty), but they also have to observe everything that happens during the event. They are required to respond to various unexpected situations or conditions, which may disturb their interpretation process (Luo, 2018). Fourth, their good responses are also caused by their ability to think quickly, in the sense that they can quickly think about the naturalness and acceptability of their words to the target language viewers. This finding confirms that quick-thinking and quick-response are significantly related to the quality of interpretation and the work performance of an interpreter on stage (Dai, 2021; Khrisna, 2008; Syahputra, 2017).

J. Optimisms

An example of this component is shown by the interpreter's ability to interpret from the beginning to the end of an event. Moreover, having the courage to make mistakes when interpreting and learning from them also manifests optimism at work. Another example is by completing the interpretation duty to which they are assigned. When starting an interpretation, although sometimes one cannot hear all the speaker's speech clearly, the interpreter should still try to finish the duty - hence the optimism (Luo, 2018). By having optimism, the interpretation results will most likely be good (Pochhacker, 2004). The concept of optimism proposed by Luo (2018) is shared by both interpreters. The results of this study show that they are equally optimistic in doing their work. This is proven through their performances in the

events. The need for having optimism in interpreting is consistent with the findings of the previous studies revealing that being an interpreter takes a lot of optimism since it can positively influence the success of an interpreter in making accurate and acceptable interpretation (Da Silva et al., 2018; Dai, 2021; Luo, 2018; Pochhacker, 2004).

V. CONCLUSION

Some of the work attitude components possessed by the community interpreters in the religious settings in Indonesia include: (a) work endurance; (b) professionalism; (c) responsibility; (d) emotional stability; (e) cooperation; (f) impartiality; (g) wisdom; (h) proactiveness; (i) responsiveness; and (j) optimism. The results of the study confirm that each of the interpreters shows the aforementioned components perfectly while doing their interpreting tasks. Both have succeeded in finishing their duties fluently. Both the spiritual refreshment program led by Ev. John Hartman and the revival meeting event led by Ps. Benny Hinn have ended well. The success of these interpreters proves that a good and appropriate work attitude can positively contribute to the interpreter's interpreting competence.

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