

## **THE ROLE OF INTERPRETER IN DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL TRADING OF RATTAN FURNITURE: A CASE STUDY AT TRANGSAN VILLAGE, GATAK, SUKOHARJO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purposes of this study are to find the role of interpreter in developing international trading of rattan furniture and the type of interpreting that they applied in doing their task. The data are taken by using an open-questionnaire, in depth interviewing, observation and content analysis. The technique of data analysis is Interactive Analysis. The result shows that interpreting has a great role in developing the international trading, especially for businessmen who do not master English. It will help them increase their selling products. There are also four roles of interpreter in developing the international trading of rattan furniture at Trangsan, Gatak, Sukoharjo: interpreter as insparator, mediator, explanator and guide. The interpreter only applies two types of interpreting: sight and consecutive interpreting.*

**Key words:** *Interpreter, International Trading, and Rattan Furniture.*

### **1. Introduction**

Trangsan is one of the villages located in Gatak sub-district. Since many years ago, people called this as the rattan home industry village. In this village, people can find rattan furniture easily, such as chairs, cupboards, antique souvenirs, hand crafting, and the like. More and more, the craftsmen become active and creative. Finally, they do not want to develop their business in the scope of local only but also in the international level. To do it successfully, they need some efforts related to the international trading requirements.

Meanwhile, the coming of globalization era causes many problems and opportunities. One of them is about language. It is due to the

fact that language is one of the important media for human beings. Language is basic to humanity. Language is highly needed by people since it constitutes an effective tool for them to communicate. By understanding language well, people can express their feeling and thoughts. Language is really useful and important for human's life.

Basnett (1980) states that through language people are able to send and receive messages. It means that by language human beings can communicate with others to express their minds, ideas, thoughts, and desires orally. In this way, people can understand each other. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that language as a communication in-

strument is a channel to express intention, and feeling and it enables people to establish relationship with others. This condition is important, especially in the global era. But very often communication breaks down because people cannot speak other languages. This means the role of oral translation or interpreting will be important.

At present, interpreting has a great role as the media of communication for selling the goods and services in international trading. The development of technology makes people master language for doing the international trading. At least, they need the service provided by the professional interpreter.

One of the problems faced by the craftsmen of rattan furniture at Trangsan, Gatak, Sukoharjo in selling their products internationally is communication. They feel that they cannot communicate with the buyers who speak in other languages, especially English. For the big companies, perhaps, they have had staff who can speak English so there will be no problem. But for the home industry of rattan furniture, they do not have any staff who can speak English and they cannot speak English by themselves. Therefore, one of the alternative solutions is by asking someone to accompany them in developing their business. The man who helps them is called the oral translator or interpreter.

Pochhhacker (2004: 10) states that interpreting is regraded as translational activity, as a special form of translation. Interpreting is performed 'here and now' for the benefit of people who want to engage in communication across barriers of language and culture. It means that discussing interpreting is not so different from translation. It is due to the fact that exactly translation is divided into two. They are oral translation and written one. The oral translation is known as "interpreting". The person who does this job can be called interpreter and another one is known by people as "translator". It means that the person who does

the written translation may be stated as translator.

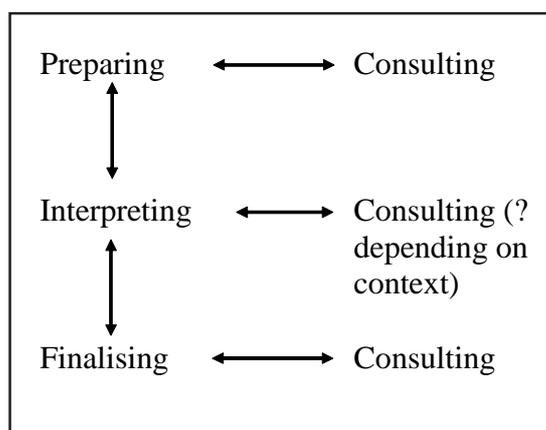
Gile (1995 : 1) states that interpretation and translation are practiced under a wide variety of conditions. Many interpreters and translation works full-time. Another expert in translation, Catford (1974: 20) also states that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. If it is done in the oral form, it can be defined as interpreting because the activity is handled orally. Completely, the full definition will be "the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language orally or in the form of oral". Arjona (in Nababan 1999: 87) states that interpreting is transferring the oral message in crossing cultural and communication (language). Weber (1984: 87) also states that interpreting or 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 the participants. Nababan (1997: 86) explains that interpreting is also a process of transferring the message. Basically, interpreting is similar to translation. Both of them deal with two languages and focus on meaning. In a certain point, however, they have differences. The result of translation can be read by readers but the result of interpreting should be listened by the listeners.

Gentile (1996: 5) states that the diversity of language has, throughout history, created the need for methods of communication between speakers of different language. Interpreting-the oral transfer of message between speakers of different languages-is thus one of the oldest of human activities, and the role of the interpreter is arguably one of the oldest of the professions.

The last definition is taken from Shuttleworth and Cowie. In their book, *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, they (1997: 83) state that interpreting is a term used to refer to the oral translation of a spoken message or text. It

means that interpreting cannot be separated from oral proficiency. Their listening and speaking skills will influence the result of interpreting. The listening skill will influence the result of understanding to the listened material. This understanding is, of course, very important. It will become the product of interpreting activity. After having good understanding, the speaking skill will influence the process of re-explaining the material in different language. In this process, the skill of speaking will take a great role. If the interpreting has good skill of speaking, the result of interpreting will be better.

It is very important to know the process of interpreting. It is due the fact that having a good understanding to the right concept will influence the result of interpreting. Having a good product of interpreting will make clients satisfied. The process of interpreting is some steps that should be done by the interpreter simultaneously or in the real time. The process of interpreting does not need much time. All stages in the interpreting process happen in a real time. It means that there no time for the interpreter to rethink, reconstruct and reconsider what have they spoken about. Coleman (2001: 20) describes the stages in the interpreting process as follows.



According to Coleman (2001), in the stage of preparing; the interpreter should discuss his needs with the clients; clarify the con-

text: conference interpreting, community interpreting, etc. In this stage, he also adds that the interpreter should also make an agreement the mode in which the interpreting will take place: simultaneous, consecutive, and so on. The interpreter must not forget to have agreement with the client related to the time, fee, contractual arrangements, and other special requirements. The next is negotiating with the speaker(s) in advance, if at all possible. The interpreter gains access to the text as far in advance as possible (if it exists) and translate it if necessary but be prepared for the speaker to deviate from it. The interpreter must identify who the audience will be, what familiarity they will have with the subject matter and the genre of the text, and what their expectation are. If necessary, he or she should find out more about the subject matter and seek advice from specialists who are familiar with the subject matter. He or she must not forget to predict terminology or expression likely to arise and prepare oneself; consult other specialists.

Moreover, Coleman (2001) explains some points which should be considered by the interpreter in the stage of interpreting : as far as possible, interpret into one`s first language; the strain is much less. Interpreting in both directions as the same time in a dialogue is a heavy strain. Considering the possibility of team interpreting, i.e. take a break after the first 30 minutes and let the partner takes over for the next 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, Korac (in Coleman, 2001: 21) finds that errors in meaning increase constantly after 30 minutes; nonsense statements increase after 30 minutes; interpreters are not aware that the frequency of errors and nonsense is increasing. Stay calm: remember that actually nobody is paying attention to the interpreter; they are listening to the principal speaker(s).

Next, he adds his explanation that the speaker himself may be nervous, about the context, about the content of what is being said,

or about being interpreted. You can help to make him feel more relaxed. Let the language flow through you; the content is not your responsibility; you are simply the medium. As far as possible, use the same standpoint as the speaker. Avoid putting yourself in a position where you are commenting on or glossing what the speaker says.

In this case Coleman gives an example of using the same pronouns as the speaker(s). So if the speaker says, "*Saya berharap...*" the interpreter's job is to say "I hope ..." not "He hopes ..." or "He says that he hopes ...". Encourage speakers to address each other, not you. Try to avoid situation where the speaker says to the interpreter, "ask him if he has a pain in his stomach" rather than "Do you have a pain in your stomach?". Ask the speaker to pause after reasonable chunks – but chunks should be meaningful, not random; experienced speakers can "feel" when to do this even if they are not linguistically trained. "The bolder or more experienced interpreters will interrupt to insist that the parties speak up or rearrange themselves to improve audibility". Inexperienced speakers – or speakers not familiar with being interpreted – need guidance and will welcome it. Avoid taking the side of the speaker and avoid getting involved in negotiations (unless the role has been clarified with both parties in advance and that is what you are being employed for).

In the stage of finalizing, Coleman explains that the interpreter should discuss with client about any problems that arose, discuss with the speaker(s) and audience any issues that arose, prepare and deliver the invoice and make a note for his own file, about significant problems and language issues which appeared.

There are several types of interpreting. Weber (1984: 27) divides the type of interpreting into three, namely: (1) sight translation, (2) consecutive interpretation, and (3) simultaneous interpretation. Meanwhile, Nababan (1999: 87–88) explains that there are four

types of interpreting. They are sight translation, consecutive interpretation, simultaneous interpretation and whispered interpretation. These kinds of interpreting are classified based on the method or manner or the way of how interpreting process is done.

Sight translation is the kind of interpreting in which the interpreter interprets the message from the written message found in the source language into the target language in form of oral (Nababan, 1999). Through sight translation or interpretation, the interpreter should master how to conduct themselves in front of an audience. They also acquire the basic reflexes required to transpose a message into another language orally.

Consecutive interpretation is a kind of interpreting in which interpreter and speaker are sitting together in the same location with an audience (Nababan, 1999). The interpreter should master how to analyze a message that is presented to them orally at increasing speed. Consecutive interpreting understood in this way proceeds as follows; the interpreter listen to a (sometimes fairly lengthy) section of a speech delivered in source language, and makes notes; such as notes tend to serve simply as a brief memory aid rather than being a shorthand transcription of all that is said. The speaker then pauses to allow the interpreter to render what has been said into target language. When the section has been interpreted the speaker resumes with the next section, until the whole speech has been delivered and interpreted into target language.

Simultaneous interpreting is a kind of interpreting process in which the interpreter and speaker are speaking together with the same material (Nababan, 1999). The interpreter works in the special room and listens to the speaker with special aid (earphone), then while observing to what is happening in the forum, the interpreter should interpret the material given by the speaker in the same time and the same topic simultaneously. Precisely, in simul-

taneous interpreting, the interpreter acts as a kind of invisible presence; sitting in a special booth and working with headphones and microphone, he or she listens to the source language speech, and reformulates it in target language as it is delivered. Meanwhile, Setton (1999: 1) states that Simultaneous interpretation is as phenomenon of cognitive performance using the tools contemporary 'communicate' linguistics and cognitive psychology. Simultaneous interpretation has been practiced in this modern acoustically-assisted form for about fifty years, and has become the standard medium of multilingual communication in international organization, both intergovernmental and private.

Whispered interpreting is a form of interpreting in which the interpreter sits next to the client or delegate for whom he is interpreting and whispers the interpreted version of what is being said (Nababan, 1999). It is used in various setting, such as business meetings, conferences and trials. Therefore in this kind of interpreting, the interpreter is not allowed to produce any voice. The interpreter should speak to the speaker softly.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are four types of interpreting. They are (1) sight interpreting, (2) consecutive interpreting (3) simultaneous interpreting and (4) whispered interpreting. The interpreter may apply the types of interpreting according to the context, situation and condition.

## **2. Research Method**

This study applies a qualitative research approach. This study was done at Trangsan village, Gatak sub-district, Sukoharjo regency. The data were taken from informants, activities and documents. The collected data were taken from an open-questionnaire, in depth interviewing, observation and documentation. To check the validity of data, the writer used triangulation method. Meanwhile, to analyze the collected data, he applied Interactive Analysis.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1 The Role of Interpreter in Developing International Trading of Rattan Furniture.**

The finding of the research shows that there are four roles of interpreter in developing the international trading of rattan furniture at Trangsan, Gatak, Sukoharjo. They are as inspirator, mediator, explanator, and guide.

The inspirator means that the interpreter may take his role in pre-trading. As we know that the first step of the international trading (export) is looking for the buyer. The seller should have the buyer before sending his goods or products: rattan furniture. Hunting the buyer is not an essay task. For the big and professional companies, seeking the buyer, perhaps, will not be a serious problem. They have owned link and permanent customers. However, the home industry or small company or new company, it will get specific problem. In this step, the interpreter can take a part to play his role as *inspirator*. According to informant JS, hunting a buyer needs special attention. Not every buyer who comes to this country is interested in their products. For this, the seller should be patient and careful in seeking them. The seller who does master English needs to be accompanied by interpreter. The interpreter gives some inspirations of how to get buyers, for instance; giving information to the seller where the buyers usually spend their nights, accompanying him to visit some exhibitions abroad, joining the international trading association of rattan furniture; hunting the address of the buyers through the a certain catalog, downloading the internet and so on. Those inspirations are usually proposed by the interpreter. It means that interpreter are more active than seller in getting buyers. The same statement is also explained by the informant AS. He said that the creative and active seller would have buyers quickly. For this need, the role of interpreter is very important. The seller (exporter) who does not understand English needs to be accompa-

nied by the interpreter in this step because this step is very crucial. This step — hunting buyers — will influence the next steps. So, it must be done carefully.

As the mediator, the interpreter will help the seller to do negotiation with the buyer. According to informant, AS, in negotiating the business, the role of interpreter is as the mediator who helps the seller to negotiate the buyer especially in re-explaining or transferring the oral communication. He is as the helper of communication between seller and buyer. Informant AS adds that exactly the role of interpreter in this negotiation is not only as mediator but also as the second negotiator. The interpreter does not only transfer the message stated by the seller to the buyers in their communication orally but he must also try to make sure that the buyer is interested in the product proposed. Finally, the process of negotiation is running well. A similar information is also given by informant JS. JS explains that in the process of negotiation, the seller usually brings the designs or photos of the rattan furniture. The role of the interpreter is to help him in explaining the photos or designs to the buyer and make him (buyer) interested in the negotiation. It means that the role of the interpreter is as the mediator in their communication. As the mediator, the interpreter should make their communication (between seller and buyer) run well.

*Explanator* in this research means someone who explains the material/text to another person. In this case, the interpreter has a role to give explanation to speaker. As we know, that to do international trading, it also needs written communication (correspondence). According to informant JS, when the boss receives a letter or facsimile from his partner, he calls JS to explain the content of the letter or facsimile. He does not want him to translate in the written form, but he wants JS to interpret it directly by using sight interpreting. The main point, the boss understands the

subject and complete information given by the sender. The interpreter should interpret directly. The same thing was also stated by informant AS. He said that if the Boss received a letter, he asked him to re-explain the letter in order to know its content. From the information given by those informants, it can be understood that the role of interpreter is as the *explanator*.

The last is the role of interpreter as a guide. The role of interpreter will become a guide when the buyer wants to check the furniture. In this site visit, the buyer wants to know not only the result of the products (rattan furniture) but also the process of making those products. In this step, the interpreter should explain all the process of rattan furniture to the buyer in detail or completely (as stated by the informant AS). As a guide, the interpreter must accompany his Boss and buyer to see all steps of rattan furniture process and explains them comprehensively to the buyer. The objective is to get the buyer's trust; that the product is qualified. The same information is also given by the informant JS. According to him, the final step of rattan furniture is in the quality control process. Usually when the buyer comes, he directly visits this division. The role of the interpreter is to explain the product to the buyer, of course, to ensure him that this product (rattan furniture) has high quality. In giving the explanation, the interpreter is accompanied by the Boss or the person in charge related to the quality control. From the information given by the informant above and after crossing check to the provided documents and result of observation, it can be concluded that the interpreter also has a role as a guide.

### **3.2 The Type of Interpreting Applied by the Interpreter in Developing International Trading of Rattan Furniture at Trangsan, Gatak, Sukoharjo.**

After doing some interviews, visiting the location to do observations, and reading some provided documents; from four types of inter-

preting stated above — sight interpreting, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and whispered interpreting — the writer only found two of them. They are sight interpreting and consecutive one.

Sight interpreting is applied by the interpreter when he has a job to explain the content of the letter or facsimile received by the Boss directly. It means the interpreter should do his job by applying sight interpreting. It is due to the fact that the letter or facsimile is written in English and the interpreter must re-explain in Indonesian.

Consecutive interpreting is applied by the interpreter when he has the job to accompany the Boss for getting buyers, negotiating the projects, and serving a site visit program. The forum of meeting can be serious or relaxed. The place of the meeting can be at international restaurant, stars hotel or at the office. The way how to do his job is that the interpreter should interpret the message idea by idea. After explaining one idea, the seller asks the interpreter to interpret directly. After re-explaining in the target language the chance will be back to the speaker.

#### **4. Conclusion**

From the explanation above, the writer may conclude that there are also four roles of interpreter in developing the international trading of rattan furniture at Trangsan, Gatak, Sukoharjo. They are the role as *inspirator*, mediator, *explanator* and guide. As *inspirator* the interpreter may take his role in pre-

trading. In this step, the interpreter can take a part to play his role as *inspirator*. For this need, the role of interpreter is very important. As the mediator, the interpreter will help the seller to negotiate the buyer. In negotiating the business, the role of interpreter is as the mediator who helps the seller to do negotiation with the buyer especially in re-explaining or transferring the oral communication. He is as the helper of communication between seller and buyer. As *Explanator*, the interpreter has a role to give explanation to speaker. In this point, the interpreter may apply sight interpreting. The main point, the Boss understands the subject and complete information given by the sender. The interpreter should interpret directly. As a guide, he will accompany the buyer that wants to check the furniture. The buyer wants to know not only the result of the products (rattan furniture) but also the process of making those products, therefore the interpreter should explain the process of making rattan furniture. The interpreter also gives all information needed by the buyer.

The interpreter only applies two types of interpreting. They are sight and consecutive interpreting. Sight interpreting is applied by the interpreter when he has a job to explain the content of the letter or facsimile received by the Boss directly. Meanwhile, consecutive interpreting is applied by the interpreter when he has the job to accompany the Boss for hunting buyers, negotiating the projects, and serving a site visit program

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